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THE

CHRISTIAD:

An HEROIC POEM;

D. Watkins.
Pacific Theo Se
Oakland

In SIX BOOKS.

WRITTEN BY

MARCUS HIERONYMUS VIDA,

And Tranſlated into ENGLISH VERSE,

BY

EDWARD GRANAN, M. A.

> Immortal VIDA! on whoſe honour'd brow
> The Poet's bays and Critics ivy grow:
> CREMONA now ſhall boaſt thy name,
> As next in place to MANTUA, next in Fame!
>
> POPE.

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THE
LIFE
OF
MARCUS HIERONYMUS VIDA.

I Think it more eligible to uſher in to the Public this performance by prefixing to it the Author's Life, than endeavour either to palliate its inaccuracies, or to diſplay its merit; fully perſuaded, that the one can no more be mended by an obſtinate defence, than the other can be totally extinguiſhed by ill-natured cenſure.

Marcus Hieronymus Vida was born at Cremona, in the year 1470. He was the ſon of Gelelmus Vida, and Leona Oſcaſala, both Italians of

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the neighbourhood of St. Leonard; and each was of illuſtrious extraction, Bonveſinus Vida being Conſul of Cremona, in 1166. But, at the time of our Author's birth, little of opulent ſplendor remained in the family, but its inherent virtue was ſtill the ſame, unaltered and unblemiſhed. To tranſmit it to their child, his parents ſent him early in life, near home, to the ſchool of the celebrated Nicolaus Laſcarus, where his progreſs in the Claſſics, Philoſophy, and Oratory, much exceeded what might be expected from his years, though not from his genius, which was found to be uncommonly bright and piercing,

Thus inſtructed at Cremona and Mantua, he went to Padua, where, and at Bologna, he applied himſelf to Divinity and Poetry; the firſt, his occupation; the ſecond, his amuſement. His ſkill in Divinity procur'd for him, when young, a Prebendary's ſtall among the Regulars of St. Mark's of Mantua, a Community of royal foundation; and, being ſoon after invited to Rome to enjoy the ſame dignity in the church of St. John of Lateran, he took his laſt leave of his parents.

When Vida went to Rome, Leo the Tenth filled the Pontifical Chair. To him it is that the finer arts owe their revival, as having extricated them from the Gothic darkneſs which for many ages had obſcured their beauties: For which reaſon his character drawn by Mr. Pope is minutely juſt, and poetically elegant:

But ſee! each Muſe, in Leo's golden days,
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays,
Rome's ancient genius o'er its ruins ſpread,
Shakes off the duſt, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then Sculpture and her ſiſter Arts revive;
Stones leap'd to form and rocks began to live;
With ſweeter notes each riſing Temple rung,
A Raphael painted, and a Vida ſung.

While Leo had in view the finding out of a Poet, whoſe judgment could diſpoſe in order, and fire animate the actions of Chriſt, Leſcaris, a King's Legate, preſented him with Vida's Scacchio or Game of Cheſs; which he no ſooner had begun to read, but his looks were expreſſive of the ſatisfaction he ſhould have in peruſing the poem. Come at length to the fictitious battle, he cried out. This, this is the man, the only one I know of ſufficient abilities to undertake, and happily to execute the life and deeds of Chriſt! Vida being immediately ſent for to court, his Holineſs deſired, he would compoſe a poem to be call'd the CHRISTIAD; and at the ſame time conferred on him the priory of St. Sylveſter in Tuſculum, that now, at his eaſe, he might purſue the work with proper aſſiduity and ſpirit.

Retired to live on his benefice, he firſt frames the plan of the Chriſtiad, then works upon it, enjoying from Leo's munificence that independence which foſters and cheriſhes the vigour of every muſe. Yet even here he was not a mere recluſe; for he ſo temper'd the ſolitary with the ſocial life, that he diſſipated the ſupineneſs that generally ſteals on the former, and avoided the diſtraction that attends on the latter.

His houſe was therefore open to men of taſte and elegance, where they were received with a plain generoſity, which freed him from paying dull compliments, and his gueſts from that reſervedneſs which formal ceremony is uſually productive of.

When Vida had finiſh'd the firſt Book, he laid it before the Pontiff for his peruſal; who, on returning the copy, to expreſs his approbation, and compliment the Author, ſpoke the following diſtich:

'Cedite Romani ſcriptores, cedite Graii;
'Hîc ſcio quid majus naſcitur Æneide.'

Ye Bards of Greece and Rome reſign your bays;
Something now loftier grows than Maro's lays.

But what place is ſecure from uneaſineſs? If Rubens, in his perſpective view of Arcadia, placed, in a corner of the delicious ſcene, a tomb inſcribed with this motto, ET IN ARCADIA, EVEN IN ARCADIA; ſurely Vida could not expect an uninterrupted ſeries of happineſs in his Tuſculum. During his reſidence here, he loſt both his parents, almoſt at the ſame time; and, to complete his affliction, his own ſupport and the life of his muſe would have died away by the death of Leo, which happened ſoon after, had not Clement VII, in the ſpace of two years (after the death of Adrian VI.) aſcended the Papal Throne.

Clement, being fellow-ſtudent with our author, and not ignorant of his genius, inſiſted that he ſhould finiſh the Chriſtiad, which he had undertaken at the inſtance of his uncle Leo. And here I hope the Reader will indulge me for obſerving, that there is not one power in Europe the learned world is more indebted to, than the Houſe of Medicis; which appears from the encouragement given to the Belles-lettres by Leo the Xth, Clement the VIIth, and Catharine of Medicis, Queen of France, all of the ſame Houſe; to the laſt of whom we owe the famous Gallery of painting in the palace of Luxembourg in Paris. When the Chriſtiad was finiſh'd, Clement patronized it, and rewarded the Author with the Biſhopric of Alba, in the

Marquiſate of Monferrat, then vacant by the death of Antonius Molus.

Paul III. intended further to promote him to the ſee of Cremona, as ſucceſſor to the Cardinal Accolita deceaſed; but his death prevented Vida's being inſtalled there. His election, however, to Cremona by the Chapter of that cathedral is ſtill extant in their regiſter, where, after the uſual preamble, are theſe words:—"They have none fitter than the Rev. M. H. Vida; one ſo excelling in all kinds of virtues and true piety, as to "deſerve much greater honours."—

This work, though intended for the moſt noble purpoſes, the promoting of Chriſtianity; and embelliſhed with the charms of poetry, to court and fix the attention; has not eſcaped the pen of Scaliger, who ſays the lines have often the tautology of Ovid, the bombaſt of Lucan, and ſometimes the words, but never the majeſty of Virgil: But this is a cenſure on words, not on things; and therefore not worth a refutation. But there is a ſerious objection made by P. Frizon, and adopted by Mr. Bayle, which is, that the ſpeeches of Joſeph and John the Evangeliſt, which take up the third and fourth Books, are too long. The force of this objection will ſoon vaniſh, if we conſider, that every tranſaction, related in either ſpeech, was new to the ears of Pilate; and conſequently what may appear tedious to a previous knowledge is generally ſhort to the raptured ſenſe of novelty. Again; unleſs we make Pilate ſuch a Judge as Shakeſpeare's, "who would hang the priſoner, before he'd eat "his mutton cold;" we muſt ſuppoſe him to have had a competent knowledge of all the particulars neceſſary for the due diſcharge of his office, and therefore to have diſregarded the law maxim, that 'nunquam longa eſt cunctatio, quando de 'vitâ hominis agitur;' as indeed, on the contrary, the deliberation in ſome caſes can never be too long, when a man's life is in queſtion.

Beſides the Chriſtiad, Vida's other genuine works are divine Hymns, his Art of Poetry, the Silk-worm, the Poem on Cheſs, three Eclogues, and ſome Poems on various ſubjects. Theſe in his life time were honoured with a place in the Academy of Bologna, and tranſlated into various languages. To him are alſo aſcribed a Treatiſe on regulating a Common-wealth, and others on Religious ſubjects.

Should we paſs in review Vida's ſentimental life, the proſpect will appear as amiable as his poetical is pictureſque. We obſerve in him the tender heart join'd with the courage of the ſoldier; the cleareſt reaſon, ſubmiſſive to Revelation; the wit of the Scholar blended with the devotion of the Hermit: We ſee him humble in an opulent eſtate; parſimonious to himſelf, munificent to others; courted by the Great, attending the poor and infirm; in ſhort, the citizen and the chriſtian happily united in his perſon.

The tenderneſs of his heart is obvious in the elegy he inſcribed to the memory of his parents; where filial piety weeps in mournfully-pleaſing numbers.—When the war raged between the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I, the French troops ſo vigorouſly beſieged Alba, that when the Imperialiſts ſaw the enemy gain the trenches and ſome enter the town, they inſtantly left the ramparts defenceleſs, and ſought ſafety in the moſt fortified parts. Vida, laying aſide the Mitre, and taking on him the General, rallied the citizens, and, marching at the their head, attacked, defeated, and put to flight enemy; and thus ſaved the town from the impending plunder and carnage of the ſword.

Add to this ſignal inſtance of his courage his humility, which made him as amiable to mankind, as his courage reſpectable. This appears by the poſtſcript to his Chriſtiad, where he aſſures the reader, that, if any line or thought ſhould be found in the work contrary to the dogms of faith, or the ſanction of the ancient Fathers, it ſhould be deemed as inſerted inadvertently. This learned humility is ſo peculiar to Vida, that few have endeavoured to become his rivals in the practice of this virtue: The chief rival of any note was Monſ. Fenelon, Archbiſhop of Cambray, and author of Telemachus; who, when his treatiſe on Quietiſm was cenſured, mounted the pulpit, condemn'd it publicly, and cauſed it to be burned before the door of his cathedral.

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As he imitated Virgil in the majeſty of his ſentiments, ſo he followed him in the modeſty of his expreſſions; for not one word is found in all his works that can offend the chaſteſt ear: And what the preſent Lord Lyttleton truly ſaid of our celebrated poet Mr. Thompſon may with equal juſtice be applied to Vida:

Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line, when dying, he could wiſh to blot.

He was ſent to the Council of Trent with an authority little inferior to that of the Pope's Legates; where, after having diſcharged the duties committed to him, he retired to his Dioceſe, whence he could not be withdrawn by the ſplendor of a Court, or the preſſing invitations of the Great; being employed in public works of utility, by erecting, repairing, or beautifying Religious edifices; or conſoling the uneaſy, and relieving the poor, many of whom he daily fed at his own houſe, and was careful to have them ſerv'd before he ſat down himſelf to meat. Thus happy in the conſciouſneſs of making others ſo, and labouring for above thirty-five years in the ſeveral duties of a good and pious Prelate, until his death, which happened the 27th of September, 1566, after he had lived ninety-ſix years; his body was, with ſolemnity, amidſt the cries, lamentations, and tears of the poor, buried in the cathedral of Alba, and ſoon after the citizens of Cremona erected a monument in the greateſt church of their city, with the following inſcription, the tranſlation of which I ſhall give in the words of the Rev. Mr. Pullein:

To Marcus Hieronymus Vida, Biſhop of Alba,
A man well known to the world,
The City of Cremona, decreeing, at the Public expence,
A Sepulchre to its much deſerving Citizen,
Performs its laſt duties.
Who, being endowed by nature
With every great and worthy accompliſhment,
Seemed alſo to deſerve immortality from her,
Were it not ordained
That all men muſt die;
Nevertheleſs, he ſtill lives among us,

And will live to lateſt Poſterity
In the perpetual remembrance
Of his moſt good and tender offices.
Who, having fulfilled all the duties which he owed
To the flock he was intruſted with,
Left us at a time rather fit for himſelf
Than others;
Eminent for piety, charity, faith and conſtancy,
Void of offence, dear to all;
Who not only ſo ſincerely and devoutly ſerved God,
But alſo ſo celebrated him in ſong,
As to gain a place ever to enjoy him
In Heaven,
And to the advantage of all mankind
A fame unperiſhable
On earth.
Died Sept. 27. Anno. Dom. 1566.

He was tall of ſtature; his countenance open and elevated, and the air of his aſpect grave, with a mixture of ſweetneſs, that produced at once both love and veneration. There are ſome Medals extant with his image and name on one ſide, and on the reverſe Pegaſus with this inſcription :—Quos amârunt Dii—the Favourites of the Gods. In other Medals the reverſe has this motto—Non ſtemma ſed virtus—not titles but virtue. His picture has a place in many public repoſitories of learning, and among others in the Duke of Tuſcany's Library; his writings have been admired by men of the fineſt taſte, and even commended by ſome of the ſevereſt critics, being, of all the moderns, the moſt reſembling Virgil's, in elegance, harmony, and ſimplicity.

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--- Ioſeph Stone, 2 Books,
--- Marmaduke Stone,
--- Thomas Stone,
—— Stonor, Eſq;
Mrs. Stonor,
Charles Stonor Eſq;
Mrs. Stonor,
Iohn Stonor Eſq;
Mrs Stonor,
Mr. Iames Stephens,
--- Ioſeph Stephens 2 Books
Mrs. Stephens, 2 *B*.
Mr. Samuel Steele,
--- Benjamin Steel,
--- Sudell,
Thomas Suffield Eſq;
Mr. R. Suffield,
--- Iohn Stocton,
--- Peter Stocton,
Miſs Thereſa Stocton,
Mr. Henry Styche,
Mr. Ioſeph Syers,
--- Swindall,
Thomas Stapleton Eſq;

T

The Hon. Francis Talbot,
The Hon. —— Talbot,
The Hon. Thomas Talbot,
The Hon, Mrs Talbot,
Miſs Talbot,
Miſs Bab. Talbot.
Maſter George Talbot,
---- Iohn Ioſeph Talbot,
Mr. Alban Toft,
--- Iohn Taylor,
--- William Taylor,
Sir Thomas Tancred, Bart.
Mr. Taylor,
--- David Thompſon,
--- Iohn Tidmarſh,
--- Iames Tidmarſh,
--- Thornbury,
Sir Henry Titchborne, Bart,
Lady Tichborne,
—— Tuitte Eſq; 3 Books,
Mr. —— Tuitte,
Mrs. Trundley,
Mr William Trimer,
—— Trant Eſq;
Marmaduke Tunſtal Eſq;
Iohn Townley, Eſq;
Mr. Iohn Tyldeſley,

U

Mr. Charles Vann,
--- Varley,
--- Vaughan,
--- Iohn Underhill,

Mr. Randle Underhill,
--- Iohn Underhill ſtudent in medicine,

W

Her Grace the Dutcheſs of Wharton,
Mr. Moſes Walker,
--- George Wall,
--- Wake,
--- Wakeman,
--- Iacob Warburton, *Senior* 2 Books,
--- Iacob Warburton *Junior*,
--- Iſaac Warburton, 4 Books
--- Iohn Warburton,
--- Ioſeph Warburton,
--- Thomas Warburton,
--- William Warburton,
Mrs Ann Warburton,
--- Mary Whrrburton, 2 B.
Mr. Church Warden,
--- Abraham Ward,
--- Edward Ward,
--- Iohn Ward, 3 Books,
--- Iohn Walters, *Checkley*,
--- Iohn Walters,
--- Samuel Way,
Mrs. Walters,
Mr. Thomas Warrilow,
Mr. Thomas Warrilow,
--- Francis Ward,
Lady Webb,
Mr. Joſiah Wedgwood Potter to her Majeſty, 2 *B.*
--- Charles Weſton,
--- George Weſton,
--- Stephen Weſton,
Francis Whitgreave Eſq.
Mr. Thomas Weſton,
--- Iames Whitfield,
--- Iohn Whitfield,
Mrs. Waters,
Mr. Whittingham,
--- George White,
--- R. Whitnall,
Mrs. Williams,
Mr. Winſtanley,
--- Iohn Wooldrige,
--- Thomas Woolrich,
--- Aaron Wood,
--- Iames Wickins,
Anthony Wright Eſq;
Mr. Philip Wright,
--- Sampſon Wright,
--- Ioſeph Wood,
--- Iames Wrigley,

Y

Mr. Yates,

THE
ARGUMENT
OF THE
FIRST BOOK
OF
VIDA's CHRISTIAD.

After the propoſition and invocation, the poet, to furniſh himſelf with epiſodes ariſing from the ſubject, introduces Christ, his Hero, on the verge of life, repairing to Jeruſalem, where he is to ſuffer death. As he purſues his journey, he is received by Zaccheus, at whoſe houſe a meſſenger arrives, and announces the mortal ſickneſs of Lazarus. While Christ was going to Bethania, to reſtore him to life, Satan calls a council to fruſtrate the great deſigns of the Saviour. Having left Bethania, he ſtops at Simon the leper's houſe, whither Magdalen comes uninvited, repents of her ſins, and is forgiven. As he approaches Jeruſalem, he is met and conducted to the city by a band of youths and virgins, hailing him with choral ſongs, the people ſtrewing the way with their garments and flowers. The poet then gives a deſcription of the pool of Betheſda, where the Lord reſtores to Jairus the uſe of his limbs; alſo a deſcription of Solomon's temple, whence the buyers and ſellers are expelled. Next he explains the myſterious figures ſculptured on the temple-walls. Theſe exhibit the work of the creation—the tranſgreſſion of Adam—the general deluge—Abraham with uplifted ſword to ſlay his ſon—Joſeph ſold for a ſlave. Moſes's paſſage through the Red Sea.—

ARGUMENT.

Laſtly, Chriſt, leaving the temple, ſaves Suſanna from being ſtoned to death. He thence proceeds to mount Tabor. His prayer there, and transfiguration.

THE

THE

CHRISTIAD.

BOOK the FIRST.

O THOU, whoſe Godhead fills ſkies, earth, and ſeas;
SPIRIT BENIGN! inſpire my voice to praiſe
The twice-born KING, who from his Father's dome,
Gliding into the Virgin's pregnant womb,
In mortal form, inhal'd this vital air,
And ſhed his blood to ſave his human care
From the drear priſon of eternal night,
And waft the pious ſhades to fields of light.
Earth ſcarce ſuſtain'd, convulſive with a groan,
Her God in pangs, for vices not his own.
In ether's height, Sol veil'd in clouds his ſhame;
And nature lower'd, ſuffus'd with livid gleam.
THOU! once her guide, the Muſe ſhall pleas'd ſurvey
The blue immenſe, and quaff eternal day;
Unfold God's counſel, and the cauſe relate,
In ſtrains immortal, of ſo dire a fate.

Now Christ beheld the deſtin'd moments flow,
When death ſhould end, at once, his life and woe.
Full of his fate, Phenicia's bounds he flies,
And ſeeks the plains, where Salem's turrets riſe.
A band of youths and ſires around him throng
To view his deeds, which fame records in ſong:
Where-e'er he goes, new crowds his preſence draws
To ſhare his travels, and obey his laws:
The towns their thouſands pour to fill his train,
And numbers wound the deſert's ſilent reign.
So from Mount Veſulus, with pines imbrown'd,
In rills the Po creeps o'er the teeming ground;
Wide ſpread his ſtreams, as he victorious glides,
And Naids pour their urns to feed his tides.
Each bound foam'd o'er, his torrents roaring ſtray
In various beds, and burſt into the ſea.

Now from the throng his choſen Twelve he calls,
The true aſſertors of his deeds and toils
To a dark grove, where with a penſive look,
Beneath a cedar, thus in ſighs he ſpoke.
'Tis done, my friends; lo! time ſhall ſhortly bring
The day, that bears my fate on ſable wing.
Glad with my ſight no longer earth ſhall be,
But the bleſt Manes trim their bow'rs for me:
With joy to hated Solyma I go
To meet my death in all its pomp of woe;
So oft foretold: view how the Flamens flame
To caſt away that life, they cannot blame.
I dying ſhall each ancient crime deface;
Such are thy gifts, firſt Sire, of human race!

Of all its ſweets you drain'd the fruitful prize,
Mine are the woes, that from the fraud ariſe.
Yet free from ſlaughter ſhall I mount the ſkies
E'er ſable night the third day's luſtre flies.
For you, who bluſh not ſtill to hear my lore,
Of cruel pain the fates reſerve a ſtore:
Yet dare theſe ills; and bold with me conſpire
To ſcorn, for heav'nly day, this life's deſire.
No manſion here, to you no ſeat is giv'n;
Your home, your country are the fanes of Heav'n:
That realm with ſtars, to light your paſſage, glows;
Where dwell calm peace, and labour's fond repoſe:
Thither contend, tho' narrow be the road,
And fix with joy your permanent abode.
He ſaid; th' attendants with his words confus'd,
Caſt down the clouded eye, and penſive mus'd.
Then Peter, impotent to hide his care,
Thus rev'rend to the God addreſs'd his pray'r.
Offspring of God, can Heav'n thy Godhead move
To ruſh on danger, and death's anguiſh prove.
Since HIM, who whirls the ſtars, you call your Sire,
Nature obedient moves to your deſire;
From harm ſecure, perform your own decree,
Nor, ſick of day, of life profuſive be:
Pity thyſelf; let us thy pity tell,
And from thy mind thoſe dread reſolves expell,
Nor ſpurn, unkind, your helpleſs train, who wait
Guides of your way, and partners of your fate.

Thus he; with warmth the Hero thus replies;
Too blind to bluſh! too heedleſs of the ſkies!

Has earth then charms to ſeize your groveling breaſt,
And from her cares have you not learn'd to reſt?
Did e'er ſuch maxims from my labours pour?
Far other counſels wants the preſent hour;
Far other agents, pure from vile deſire,
When preſs the mandates of the mighty Sire.
Let but the ſoul imbibe one heav'nly ray,
Then ſhall this world unheeded roll away.
Labour ſhall groan, without a ſenſe of pain,
And human thoughts ſhall ceaſe the mind to ſtain.
The groupe of ills (ills flie on ev'ry ſide)
Tho' ſad, yet bear, and ſpurn with honeſt pride.
The galling tongue, dark ſlander's pois'nous breath,
Diſgrace, falſe crimes, and tortures big with death.
Myſterious ills! what joys attend your frowns;
Unfading glory, and immortal crowns.
Thus having ſaid; he gains the mountain's height;
The ſad companions on their Monarch wait,
Reſolv'd with him to feel fate's partial blows,
Touch'd with his bloom and ſoft'n'd with his woes.
Now come to palm-crown'd Jericho's fair ſeat,
Zaccheus gives the dome, and ſpreads the feaſt,
Who once to pleaſe his wicked thirſt of gold,
The mazes trod, that miſer's plans unfold.
But when his breaſt confeſs'd the preſent pow'r,
And grace deſcended in a heav'nly ſhow'r,
In diff'rent tides, quick rolls the fraudful ſtore;
The ſuff'rers one, and one relieves the poor.
In woe a Herald ſudden here appears
And his ſad meſſage wounds the liſt'ning ears;

Not far hence, Laz'rus held Bethania's plains,
Wealth ſwell'd his gates, and regal blood his veins:
The Syrian realms once heard his Sire's lore,
And conquer'd cities bent beneath his power.
His welcome portals courted ev'ry gueſt,
And poorly typ'd their Maſter's lib'ral breaſt.
Hither the Lord diſdain'd not oft to come,
And ſhare th' indulgence of the feſtive dome;
Here oft the clouds, that veil'd Him, fled away,
And pour'd his Godhead flaming on the day.
But when he heard the burthen of the plaint,
That Laz'rus ſeiz'd with ſickneſs, pale and faint,
Reſpir'd with painful throbs his gaſping breath,
And feebly ſtruggl'd on the verge of death;
The guſhing grief rolls ſtreaming down his cheeks,
And to his ſad companions thus he ſpeaks:
Since death, e'er now, has ſnatch'd our friend away,
Let's haſte our courſe to call him back to day.
If now, as oft, the Sire ſupreme will hear,
And prove his pow'r by nodding to my pray'r.
He added not; but to Bethania tends,
Environ'd by his train of faithful friends;
Behind, in long proceſſion, crowds proceed
To view the God perform the wond'rous deed.

Mean while the monſter, whoſe tyrannic ſway
The dark and wide ſtretch'd coaſts of hell obey,
With eyes tranſpiercing fate's myſterious gloom,
Sees the day rip'ning in time's pregnant womb,
Proſtrate in ruin, when his drear realm ſhall be
Himſelf a captive, and his manes free.

A crowd of plans his anxious mind o'erwhelm,
T' avert deſtruction low'ring on his realm.
He burns with rage, that to his ardent eye,
Unſeen, came down this native of the ſky,
Whoſe death ſpontaneous ſhould at once deface
The crimes and vengeance due to human race;
Of various counſels Deicide ſeems beſt;
This he revolves and foſters in his breaſt.
Without delay, his Chiefs and train he calls,
A horrid Council! to his palace-walls:
And lo! the trump emits the piercing ſounds,
Which the huge dome thro' all its cells rebounds.
Loud roars each cavern from its gloomy ſeat,
And earth vibrates beneath its pond'rous weight.
Inſtant the gate with various ſpectres ſwarms,
To day adverſe, and ſtrange with monſt'rous forms;
Their breaſts expreſs the man, their waſtes forſake,
And writhe with ſpiry folds into a ſnake:
Gorgons and ſphynxes breathe an horrid air;
Some ſtalk a centaur, ſome a hydra ſtare;
Theſe riſe chimeras, ſpouting livid fires,
And Scylla's barking image thoſe inſpires.
Fiends clad in harpies ſwell the dreadful train
And realiſe the ſhapes, that mortals feign.
Above the reſt, the form of towring ſize,
And flaming front of hell's grim tyrant riſe:
With hundred hands th' ambient air he cleaves,
And his throat pours a hundred burning waves.
From all their mouths, and eyes, and noſtrils ſtream
Dark gales of fume, and ſheets of ſickly flame.

Around their heads ſnakes bend into a wreath,
And dimpling down their necks in hiſſes breathe;
Each wields a trident, each a firebrand ſhakes,
That urge the guilty ghoſts to burning lakes.
From earth's green margin ſpectres hither ſwarm
Who with oblivion ſhade fair Virtue's form;
In ev'ry clime, thro' which they vagrant ſtray,
And dazzle men with ſin's fictitious ray.
To theſe ſucceed the wing'd infernal race,
Riding in clouds and ever changing place;
Who tempeſts rule, and ruder blaſts inform,
And low'ring mount the horrors of the ſtorm.
All come with ſouls elate, in counſel ſtrong,
And the roofs eccho to th' infernal throng.
Till in the mid the King majeſtic roſe,
And while he ſpeaks, his hand with thunder glows.

Tartarean Chiefs, whoſe births from ether ſpring,
Sad victims, now, to Heav'n's inclement King;
Who (proudly weak, thro' luſt to reign alone,
To bear each Equal, rival of his throne)
Againſt us roll'd his thunder big with fate,
And hurl'd us flaming from our native ſeat.
Should fame deny our conflicts to renew,
The woes that wait us, ſhall preſent to view
What wars we kindled in th' etherial plain;
What fury labour'd in each adverſe train,
But now the Victor boaſts the ſtars his prize,
And arrogates the ſceptre of the ſkies.
How dire his vengeance our diſaſters tell;
Once brightneſs wrapt us, now the gloom of hell;

Our lot's to ſhare, with human ghoſts theſe ſcenes,
In crimes once like us, now alike in pains.
Earth intervenes between our hope and Heav'n
And in reward, our thrones to men are giv'n.
But here end not our woes ; again, he frames,
Raging with war, his deep concerted ſchemes ;
To drive us hence in ſtratagems he low'rs,
And hell's the envy of the bliſsful bow'rs :
For this deſign, a youth forſakes the ſkies
(His Son or Angel in a youth's diſguiſe)
Prepares, relying on celeſtial aid,
To pour deſtruction on theſe realms of ſhade ;
Withdraw our ſubject-ſpirits from our lore,
And leave us with the impotence of pow'r.
Perhaps (unleſs we bold fruſtrate the means)
Ourſelves ſhall feel the ſlav'ry of his chains,
Be led in triumph to the bleſt abodes,
The glory He, and we the ſcorn of Gods.
Think not this caution flows from fancy's fear ;
Experience has confirm'd the truth you hear :
To ſay he's mortal, is to view his frame ;
To ſay he's woundleſs, hear each baffled ſcheme :
I have intrepid oft oppos'd his way,
And oft decreed him to my wiles a prey ;
Approach'd him various in each ſhape and air,
That hatred can belye or malice wear.
But armleſs he, my keeneſt arms defies,
And without uſing ſtrength, my ſtrength outvies ;
For by his utt'ring of the Prophets ſtrain,
Arms blunt, deceits unmaſk, and words are vain.

But to my counſel now attention pay ;
To Salem's ancient tow'rs he bends his way.
Tho' odious there to all their hoary Sires,
And to the Prieſts, who zealous for their choirs,
Their myſtic forms, and their paternal laws,
Reſolve to ſlay him in religion's cauſe.
For thro' the towns new myſt'ries he reveals,
Preſcibes new rites divine, and old repeals.
Now with occaſion let your aid conſpire
On him to pour the Rabbi's deadly ire ;
And leſt truth ſhould a gen'rous ſenſe impart,
Their anger calm and humanize the heart ;
Soft in their minds infuſe a pois'nous hate,
And to ferment it, lyes as truth relate.
Then blow it into rage by ſland'rous breath,
And never let it die, but with his death.
But could we gain by fraud or ſmooth applauſe,
One of his choſen twelve to 'ſpouſe our cauſe,
Then conqueſt's ours, and chilling fear withdraws.

Scarce had he finiſh'd, when the wicked band,
Impatient to perform the dire command,
Impetuous pour diverſe thro' all the gates,
And earth the murmur feels thro' her retreats.
Now pois'd in air, they cut the darkſome ſpace,
And earth's expanſe with ſnaky pinions graze.
In greater myriads not the flower-fed bees,
(When Auſter rain not, nor fierce Boreas freeze)
In fields of ether war indignant wage,
Of rival Kings to vindicate the rage.
Sad is the place, on which theſe demons low'r !
How great the havock ! havock their ſole power !

Near to Bethania come, God's offspring ends
His pious march, attended by his friends;
There virgin Martha, Magdalena there,
(From Magdel's ancient town they nam'd the Fair)
With hair diſorder'd, and with ſtreaming eyes,
Performing at the tomb their obſequies,
He view'd: Whom when the mornful virgins ſaw,
They leave their friends, and from the rites withdraw:
Firſt pay the homage to his preſence due,
Then pour their grief while tears their cheeks bedew.
In tender words, and looks o'ercaſt with gloom;
Are you then come to view our brother's tomb?
Who to his aid oft call'd You, noble gueſt,
While with death's chilling cold he lay oppreſs'd.
Nor is there room to doubt, had you been here,
He would have now inhal'd the vital air;
But ſince your pray'rs are realiz'd in heav'n,
To hope, that he ſhall live again, is giv'n.

While thus they pray'd, grief melts the ſtanders-by
And from their breaſts reſults one gen'ral ſigh.

The Chief forbids the crowd the youth deplore,
Intent to free him and to life reſtore,
Tho' rolls the fourth ſun, ſince he was no more.
The town ſoon ecchoes with the wond'rous fame;
And ſends her thouſands to behold the ſame,
The mountains, eager to detail his ſkill,
Pour down their people and the valley fill.

The tomb approach'd, the youths there form a ring 285
Where ſtands in ſilent pray'r the Heav'n-born King,
With hands ſtretch'd forth, and with erected eyes
Invokes his Father to his enterpriſe.
The crowd in ſilence and ſurpriſe, attend
The op'ning of the wonder and the end. 290
Twice from his face the ſhifting tincture flies;
Nods ſhake his head, and twice burſt forth the ſighs.
But lo! the tomb ſhakes with a quick'ning throe
The ſight forbids the gazers' blood to flow,
On all their ſenſes pours a dewy fear, 295
And from the Hero draws this vocal pray'r.

Tho' ever preſent, O Imperial Sire!
To give relief and ſecond my deſire;
Still thanks moſt warm are for this favour due,
Which paints thy virtue to the people's view. 300
But haſte ye ſervant throng, the tombſtone heave,
Tear from the corps the drap'ry of the grave.
Without delay wide opes the yawning tomb,
And blots the ſtiffn'ing crowd with horrid gloom.
With looks ſhot down the vault, they trembling eye
The faded corps in foul diſhonour lye, 306
And heave with life's inſinuating ſigh.
Thrice, Lazarus come forth, the Hero cries,
When from the tomb he ſtalks and breathes the ſkies.
The circling train, with chilling horror wan, 310
With inexhauſted looks devour the man;
Inhale with greedy ears his riſing breath
Which to them wafts the ſeries of his death.

How the rack'd ſoul in ſad and plaintive cries,
Her conſort body with reluctance flies :
What furies, in dread ſhapes, diſplay'd their pow'r,
And threatning roſe upon his dying hour :
With pain the ſpirits of eternal day
Chas'd the foul demons from their preſent prey.
To this, the cluſter of rewards ſucceeds,
That terminate the bliſs of virtuous deeds.
The pains, the guilty feel, conclude the theme,
Their wretched fate and hell's eternal flame.

The wonder finiſh'd, by requeſt o'ercome
The God repairs to Simons' neighb'ring dome,
Whoſe limbs diſtain'd with leproſy's diſeaſe
The God refin'd, and bade the fury ceaſe.
While at the board, with grateful viands preſt,
Amid the Nobles, ſat the welcome gueſt ;
Unbidden, lo ! a maid invades the room,
Fam'd for her mien, and texture of the loom :
Her purple robe ſwell'd, ruſtling in each fold,
With ſilver cloy'd, and interwoven gold ;
Pond'rous with gems, the luxury of her veſt
(Her ſhoulders pride) a golden claſp compreſt.
A cawl her treſſes held in ringlets wreath'd,
Sleak with the comb, and liquid amber bath'd.
O'er which with ſtudded jewels blaz'd her Tire,
And a large ruby ſet her front on fire.
Big pearls and diamonds ſtrung on fuſile gold,
Around her neck their blended luſtre roll'd.
So earth (her boſom bright with vernal ſhow'rs)
Unlocks her gems and decks herſelf with flow'rs.

An orphan left by both her parents' death,
This maid became ſole heireſs of their wealth. 345
Religion to her tender age beam'd fair,
And bluſhing honour was her virgin care.
But by degrees youth revels in her veins
And Venus furious in her ſenſes reigns,
Who in her boſom lights unlawful fire, 350
And the broad blaze conſumes each pure deſire.
Now loſt to all, that grace a virgin's name,
Religion, coyneſs, and a Veſtal fame,
In pride of womanhood, ſhe joys to roam,
A vulgar object, from her private dome. 355
Shines firſt at banquets, and theatric ſcenes
And giddy bears not admonition's reins.
So ſome tall ſhip, without a pilot's guide,
When the big waves upon the tempeſt ride,
Subject to billows and the ſtorm's domain, 360
A vagrant courſe purſues along the main.
Of her large ſtore of ancient wealth now vain,
She meditates, among the youthful train,
To ſoothe him into love, whoſe manly form,
Above the reſt, ſhall glow with ev'ry charm. 365
And now ſhe hears, that one of beauteous frame
Hither arriv'd, and ſtil'd a God by fame.
Her joy, impatient of a long delay,
To view the ſame ſhe bends her rapid way.
But when his mien exhal'd its breathing grace, 370
And ſhe inhal'd the luſtre of his face;
When her breaſt caught his eyes' love-feeding beams,
Her former paſſion ſudden ſhe diſclaims,
And feels her heart refine with chaſter flames.

And now ſeven firebrands, horrid to behold!
Ruſh from her lips benighted in a cloud;
Dark as the ſparkles, that in gaſps aſpire
From dying taper, and in fume expire.
Lo! flies, exclaims the God, the fouleſt Fiend,
Who prey'd upon her heart and warpt her mind.
Maria then (ſuch was the damſel's name)
New in deſire, nor now in thought the ſame,
Who hither came, in conſcious beauty bold,
Her boſom blazing with embroider'd gold;
Tears off the glories, that her head ſurround,
And her bright bracelet twinkles on the ground;
Her tunic ſpurns, that caſts a golden gleam,
Rack'd with the ſenſe of guilt and fluſh'd with ſhame.
Prone as the dog, beneath his maſter's board,
For pity, proſtrate ſhe invokes the Lord:
Clings to his knees, his feet with tears bedews,
And dries with robes, aſſum'd for other views.
Now from an alabaſter urn ſhe brings
The blended fragrance of Arabia's ſprings.
The bluſhing Caſia, Nardus' od'rous ears,
Amomum ſweet, and frankincenſe's tears.
Faſt on his feet the od'rous ſtreams ſhe pours,
And the air grows pregnant with the balmy ſhow'rs,
Pleas'd he receives the homage of the Fair,
Her faults abſolves, and points to heav'n her care.

Mean while in mournful groupes the patients come,
From neighb'ring cities, and ſurround the dome,

The Blind for ſight, the Lame for motion cry,
The Dumb for ſpeech, the Deaf for hearing ſigh.
Hither the inſane for relief are brought,
Unconſcious of their ſtate, as void of thought;
But God diſtreſs'd with each peculiar pain,
Reliev'd and ſent them back, a healthful train.
He ſeeks, departing hence, Jeruſalem,
The mighty fabrick of thy ſons, O Shem,
Planter of vines! when earth ſuperior ſtood
To the broad ſurface of the general flood,
And the check'd ocean in his channel flow'd.
With victor-arms the Jebuſites then came,
And call'd the captive city by their name.
Here Juda's race with regal blood elate,
Subdu'd the neighb'ring vales, and fix'd their ſeat.
Here rear'd great Solomon, with foreign toil,
From of everted ſhrines the copious ſpoil,
An awful temple, of ſtupendous ſize,
Its airy ſummit mingling with the ſkies:
All other fanes their ornaments reſign,
To dreſs this temple out for rites divine.
Here, brazen ciſterns, dazz'ling to behold,
Here tables ſhone, compos'd of maſſy gold:
Here fleecy robes drank deep the purple dye;
And the ſtiff veſtments glitter'd on the eye:
Altars aroſe devote to ſanguine rites,
And pendent lamps diffus'd their awful lights.
Here tripods, cenſers, bowls blaze on the ſkies,
And all the great parade of ſacrifice.

Jehovah's ſtatutes ſculptur'd deep on ſtone,
And ſhrin'd in wood religiouſly here ſhone.
Before the king, and in the people's view,
The prieſt, within the fane, the victim ſlew.
In this ſole place, the holy pow'r is found,
With ritual gore, to ſtain the bluſhing ground:
For Iſrael's race, by cuſtom hither led,
Thrice in the year the victim-homage bled.
The Lord oft to this temple bent his way,
To ſhare the rites, and adoration pay.

When the Meſſiah near Jeruſalem drew,
The tow'rs and columns ruſhing on the view,
The train of thouſands, who his labours ſhare,
Boughs in their hands of palm and olive bear.
The foot precede, behind him move the horſe,
And in the mid, the Hero takes his courſe;
No prancing ſteed, in pride of trapings dreſt,
Nor foaming with keen life the Hero preſt:
But to the poor his darling want to ſhew,
An aſs, beneath him, moves his dull feet ſlow.
(This deed once ſtrung the Prophet's ſacred lyre,
And from the theme he caught celeſtial fire)
Bare was his head; his robe (the work of love,
Which for his youth his tender mother wove)
Flow'd to his ancles, in a various fold;
Tho' worn, yet new, nor by duration old:
A pair of ſandals on his feet he laced,
And in this humble pomp the city traced.
Before the gate in long arrangement ſtand
A choir of youths and maids, a beauteous band:
Twin'd

Twin'd in the virgins' locks the roſes breathe ;
And with ſhorn crowns the youths their temples wreathe.
Large boughs of living palm their hands employ
And their glad hymns flow ſparkling with their joy.
All vie, with holy emulation warm,
Who moſt may view the God's delightful form.
Within the walls, the people form a ring,
And ardent preſs to hail the Saviour—king.
Spears grace their hands, their olives flaſh their dyes,
And their applauſes rattle 'long the ſkies.

Rous'd with the cries that thro' the city ſtray
Quick roſe the ſages, who the nation ſway.
The cauſe unknown, and ſtruck with deep ſurpriſe,
To ſee large clouds of duſt obſcure the ſkies,
Of this uproar demand the ſudden cauſe,
Who leads the crowd, and whence this vaſt applauſe ?
But thoſe, who thro' his fame the Godhead ſpy,
Augment his train, and ſwell the rapt'rous cry.
The ſtreets, he viſits, they with purple ſtrew,
And on the pavement Indian carpets glow.
Some roads are kindled with profuſive flow'rs,
And the broad ſurface ſwells with crimſon ſhow'rs.

Not far he paſs'd, when lo ! another train
Salute his entry in a gladſome ſtrain :
Pleas'd he receives the raptures of their hearts,
And full of wonder from the crowd departs.

A vale ſubſides among umbrageous hills,
Where ſpreads a pool fed with perpetual rills:
The city dames for water hither came
The cattle here drown'd deep their thirſty flame
And ſickly flocks roſe healthful from the ſtream.
Hence after times, as fame divulges, gave
The name Betheſda to the healing wave.
At certain ſeaſons of the circling year,
The morbid patients to its banks repair;
For oft the pool in tumult ſeem'd to riſe,
And ſpout its azure current to the ſkies.
The moving principle long latent lay,
Which youths and virgins uſher'd into day:
They ſung, a cherub, blazing on the face,
His pure robe ſtreaming in the airy ſpace,
On wings incumbent ting'd with golden dyes,
Shot from the ſummit of the ſtarry ſkies,
And ſtaining his etherial route with blaze,
His hands compreſs'd to rage the placid waves.
So the bright ſtar, hung in the front of heav'n,
To mariners or camps a ſignal giv'n,
Darts from its ſeat, and flaſhing wild its fires,
The ſubject world with panick fear inſpires.
And now the ſickly groupe the pool ſurround,
Eager to catch from heav'n the bathing ſound:
Each views the liquid plain with ardent eye,
And of the breeze, each drinks the ſofteſt ſigh:
Panting to plunge the firſt into the flood
When in the air the waters trembling ſtood.
Tho' woo'd by all, to him alone, health came,
Who firſt div'd for it, in the troubled ſtream.

A band of youths, thus in a lawn's ſmooth ſpace,
Collect their vigour for the rapid race;
Their ſouls already ſtart, their hearts thick beat,
And for the tedious ſign they throbbing wait.
Hope crowns them all, and with deluſive eyes,
Each for himſelf regards the unwon prize.

Among the ſick, young Jetrus helpleſs lay,
Whoſe ſinews ſhrunk, whoſe members dy'd away:
Of ancient wealth he flouriſh'd with a ſtore;
But truſting much in Med'cine's ſaving pow'r,
He tried each virtue of the faithleſs art,
To ſtring his nerves, and motion ſwift impart,
But feeble for the taſk, art flies and leaves
Pale-hagard want aſſociate with diſeaſe.
Thus forty years beheld his limbs to fade,
Himſelf a prey to want and void of aid,
Whom when the God had ey'd in ſuch diſtreſs,
With tender looks he pours this ſoft addreſs.

Ah ſay, unhappy! why this long delay
Upon the margin? while the ſtreams convey
Their balmy moiſture, and their healing pow'r
To all the ills, that in their channels low'r,
Hence home they viſit, mindleſs of their pains,
Strength in their limbs, and ſpirits in their veins.

Weak Jetrus thus; and while he ſtrove to ſpeak,
His burſting ſorrow trickled down his cheek.
I tarniſh not the pool's ſalubrious fame
But while I wait the motion of its ſtream,

Others more active, than inactive I,
Into the roaring waters headlong flie:
For none, to bathe me, his aſſiſtance lends,
Want ſeldom feels the benefit of friends. 550

To his complaint the God vouchſaf'd an ear;
And ſaid, ariſe, and to thy home repair,
Nor think theſe waters have the pow'r alone,
To brace the nerves and to ſuppreſs the groan.
Scarce had he ſpoke, when lo! before the throng, 555
Erect ſtands Jetrus, in his movement ſtrong;
Throws on his back his couch, without delay,
And with quick ſtrides he ſtalks the rapid way.
The ſhepherd thus, who in the foreſt toils,
To cull of broken boughs the ſcatter'd ſpoils; 560
Caſts in the pile, unconſcious of the prize,
A ſnake, in leaves involv'd, and numb'd with ice.
Wak'd with the flames, that crackling round him ſpread,
Quick ſtarts the ſnake and lifts erect his head:
Darts his red eyes, and rowls in ſpires along 565
The dome, vibrating faſt his forky tongue.

Another view preſents the temple's gate,
Beneath whoſe ample arch the ſervants wait
To ſell oblations for the brazen ſhrine
To thoſe, who labour under vows divine; 570
Here bleat the flock, whoſe fleece the day improves,
Here lowe the oxen, and here cooe the doves.
When the God ſaw the traffick in the fane,
And heard rude noiſe the ſacred place prophane,

Inſpir'd with holy rage, the Hero glows,
And with reproaches deals about his blows:
The whip's percuſſions on their backs reſound,
And drive the rabble off the holy ground.
So Boreas from his Arctick cavern flies,
Ruſhing in furious blaſts along the ſkies,
Expels the low'ring clouds th'etherial plain,
And roaring arrogates the Ether's reign.
Theſe walls are hallow'd (thus the Hero cries)
And to JEHOVAH's honour ſacred riſe,
Which you with mercenary traffick ſtain,
And caſt the GOD an exile from his Fane.
Tho' blood your altars bathes, and life expires,
A ſacrifice once granted to your fires;
Such rites the ſupreme BEING pleaſe no more,
And ſheep now pour in vain their ritual gore.
Henceforth forbear his purer ſight to ſtain
With entrails warm of birds and cattle ſlain:
And now a ſpotleſs ſacrifice prepare;
And taught new rites of faith, the old forbear.
Dare to be virtuous, in libation ſhow'r
Your ſpotleſs thoughts and pray the ſupreme POW'R;
Your myſtick modes let theſe hereafter be,
Theſe be the offerings to the Deity.

This ſaid, he at the altar ſuppliant bows,
And pays his Sire in ſilent pray'r his vows.

And now the prieſts with deep reſentment riſe,
Grief in their hearts, and anger in their eyes;

Nor was their furious rage a recent gueſt,
Nor was their hate a ſtranger to the breaſt:
Stor'd in their minds, the ancient cauſe of ire 605
Lay deeply grav'd, and ſet their ſouls on fire.
Yet ſtill they fear'd their cruelty to wage,
For loth to rouze the mob's vindictive rage.
Inſtant they leave the temple's inmoſt ſeats,
Content to vent their wrath in murmuring threats. 610
The wolves at night thus to the fold repair,
But ſhepherds watchful o'er their fleecy care,
With vocal dogs their bloody progreſs ſtay,
And chaſe them headlong from the bleating prey.
Sudden they part, tho' wild with famine's ſting, 615
And the wide foreſts with their roaring ring.

But while the God before the altar bends,
And to his Sire his ſoul in pray'r aſcends,
About the temple rove his ſocial band,
Struck with its grandeur and the builders hand. 620
Scoop'd from huge rocks a hundred columns ſpread
Their frames, high as their parent-mountains head.
Of equal number, and of equal ſize,
Columns of ſolid braſs reſplendent riſe.
In the large beams they view the cedars ſtrength, 625
And the arch'd cielings everlaſting length.
The brazen doors on creeking hinges ſound,
And the ſquar'd marble ſmoothes the painted ground.
Here into pillars ſheets of gold are roll'd
And tables ſpread their plains in burniſh'd gold. 630

Bright chariots in the temple votive riſe,
Diſtinct with iv'ry and with ebon dyes.
While on theſe objects the diſciples gaze;
The Hero paid his tributary praiſe;
And coming forward ſilent and unſeen,
Thus ſpoke abrupt with a dejected mien.
Already Solyma the vengeance due
To all thy deeds, hangs frowning to the view.
This pile ſo large, this temple ſo divine,
Shall ruſh, ere long, to fragments like the pine
(Whoſe roots the wind tearing from parent ground)
A victim tumbles to the tempeſt's ſound.
The blood of Prophets, envoys of the Lord,
Which purpled once your ſacrilegious ſword,
Or ting'd your rocks, their bodies thrown from high,
Againſt you point the thunder of the ſky.
Yet ſtill to ſave you from impending pain,
How oft I anxious ſtrove, but ſtrove in vain,
To claſp your children in my fond embrace,
As the hen, anxious for her feather'd race,
The little rovers to her boſom brings,
Panting the mother in her voice and wings.
Your ſtate, already nodding, ſoon ſhall feel
The civil fury, and the hoſtile ſteel.
From dome to dome vindictive flames ſhall bound,
And human blood run crimſon on your ground.
In vain to heav'n aſcend repeated vows,
To prop your kingdom, which already bows.

Jehovah haſtes the period of your reign,
And in a foreign clime erects his fane.

This ſaid, the ſculptur'd figures he diſplays;
A true and mighty roll of ancient days.
Where the Creation ſhifts her varied face,
With all the annals of the human race.
No human image ſwells this myſtick ſcene
Nor paint belies Jehovah's awful mien:
But lines myſterious labour'd nice on ſtone,
Sketch the bold draught to bards themſelves unknown.

The Sire of Heav'n here burſting from a cloud,
Seems the drear realms of darkneſs to behold.
And whilſt before him lies the chaos-ſtate,
The world's creation ſeems to meditate.
Now from the burſting brightneſs ſeems to roll,
The ſpacious concave of the ſtarry pole;
The earth's brown orb, the ocean's azure tide,
And floods of light, that thro' the ether glide.
Whence Sol ſhall draw effulgence from his rays,
And Heav'n her ſtars ſhall kindle with the blaze.

The winged myriads of the heav'nly ſpace,
The firſt day's labour of the Supreme grace,
With plauſive wings, and with melodious ſound,
In ſwarms their parent and their guide ſurround.
Yet ſtill with earth was mix'd heav'n's burning gleam,
And ſtagnant on her ſlept the briny ſtream.
For ev'ry matter lay confus'dly hurl'd,
Which gave, arraing'd, exiſtence to the world.

Without delay, the orb of heav'n he frames,
And on it ſprinkles drops of ſtarry flames;
Now all things ſlow aſſume their proper face,
And Heav'n in vigour firm retains its place. 690

Earth in the mid, and delug'd now no more,
The heaving waters form a winding ſhore,
On ſhallows tortur'd into fury riſe,
And ſpout their azure current to the ſkies.
As yet the ſea no ſhrowded veſſel bore, 695
Nor in the waters bent appeared the oar,
But Zephyrs, ſporting innocently gay,
Dimpl'd the ſhining ſurface of the ſea.
And now the mountains riſe in beechen pride,
And vales in long extended plains ſubſide. 700
Inſtant the ground with ſeeming virtue heaves
Her lap with flow'rs to fill, the tree with leaves.
Now fields adorn their broad expanſe with green,
Now trees embrace, to form a ſylvan ſcene.
Oaks wave their branches o'er a length of glade
To join the olive, and the cypreſs ſhade. 706

To light this infant world, two globes of flame
Full in the concave arch of ether gleam;
To guard the world, they, leagued, alternate riſe,
To drop their melting luſtre from the ſkies; 710
The Sun by day Olympus' round ſurveys,
And Earth glows lucid with his native rays.
The Moon with guardian care the night adorns
Streaming a ſilver paleneſs from her horns.

Ether at night on his black forehead wears 715
A blaze of ſtars, revolving in the ſpheres.

The ſcaly herds in wanton gambols play,
Bruſh with their fins and ſwim along the ſea.
The birds their bodies poize in ethers plain,
And with indignant bills a war ſuſtain. 720

Not diſtant hence, another proſpect yields
Whole herds of cattle cov'ring all the fields;
With paſture cloy'd the woolly flocks are ſeen
Playful to ſkip along the fruitful green.
Fierce beaſts ſeem here to lurk in caverns deep, 725
And tortoiſed ſnakes along the ground to creep.
The Sire of Heav'n ſtands in a cloud confeſs'd,
And in glad accents, thus his will expreſs'd.
" With genial love increaſe and multiply,
" And give from age to age a progeny." 730

Freſh from the earth at length man naked ſtands
To whom the God ſeems utt'ring his commands;
Gives him to ſpread o'er earth his wide domain;
And life immortal, ſocial to his reign,
Had been his lot, had he obey'd the God, 735
Obſerv'd his mandates and rever'd his nod.

Her lies a garden glitt'ring on the eyes,
With branching trees and flowers of various dyes:
An azure dragon keeps his vigils nigh
To guard the fruitage bluſhing on the ſky. 740

A branching fountain in the center ſheds
Its ſilver currents in four various beds:
And ſtreaming widely o'er the ſubject plain,
Foſters the herbage, and calls forth the grain.

Here rolls the ſerpent on the ſtoried wall, 745
The fraudful worker of the firſt man's fall,
Who heedleſs of the mandate and decree,
Spoils of its apples the forbidden tree.
The youth ſcarce to his lips the fraud had giv'n,
But aw'd with all the majeſty of Heav'n, 750
Sheds faſt, to lave his crime, repentant waves
And ſtrives to wrap him and his ſhame in leaves.
But o'er him, riſing in a fleecy cloud
The Almighty ſeems to ſpeak, as thunder, loud,
Kindling with threats that may the vengeance ſpeed,
Reponſive to the horror of the deed, 755
Which once he bore, and all his race muſt bear,
Who ſhall by birth inhale this vital air.

Mean time, his conſort, who with vain deſire,
Firſt broke the mandate of the ſupreme Sire, 760
Seems here the thickeſt of the ſhrubs to gain,
And hide her folly in their ſhades in vain.
The victor ſerpent, fluſh'd with fraud, appears,
On flaming ſpires his wreathing body rears;
Thrice round the tree his length depends in rings, 765
And to applaud his conqueſt, claps his wings.
Of his ſucceſs regards with ſcorn the tool,
And laughs her eaſy faith to ridicule.

Not far remote, extend the realms of night,
With darkneſs chequer'd and a livid light.
Where ſhades of righteous men their freedom wait,
Debar'd, for one man's crime, their happy ſtate.
Here Sages ſtand with hoary rev'rence crown'd,
Here bands of bards with ſacred fillets bound:
With hands expanded and effus'd in pray'r
They ſeem to court the God at length to ſpare
The human kind, obnoxious to the rod
(For Adam's fault) of an offended God.
Superior by the ſhoulders Abraham ſpreads,
The wrath to bar, his garment o'er their heads.

Here ſtops the God; and ſays in broken ſighs,
Behold the ſcene, whence all my labours riſe;
Yet ſtill to free them from this gloomy ſtate
I, ſelf-devoted, all their tortures wait
Live o'er the ſcenes, which follow, mark'd by few,
That paint my future death to fancy's view.

In figur'd ſurges here the waters riſe,
And earth beneath the foaming burden lies.
The ark ſecure, rides o'er the liquid ſpace,
Charg'd with the reliques of the deluged race.
If any mountain's height ſuperior ſtood,
Emerging from the ocean's gen'ral flood,
The burſting clouds indignant roll their ire,
And blaſt the ſummit with a flaſhing fire.

In act to ſlay his Son, the Father ſtands
(Unhappy made by hearing Heav'n's commands)
And now his ſtrength collected in his arm,
He waves the ſteel in Iſaac's blood to warm.
When lo! An angel wing'd from ether's round,
Recalls the mandate, and prevents the wound.
A white-fleeced ram near for a victim's fed
And plac'd for Iſaac, on the altar bled.

Stung with their brother's dream the brothers ſtand:
Who's ſold a ſlave, and ſeeks a foreign land.
To the ſad ſire, the youth's dire death they feign,
Torn by wild beaſts, and barbarouſly ſlain:
He views the filial veſt beſmear'd with blood,
And his eyes bathe it with a briny flood.

Here ſhines the Hero, famous for his laws,
Aided by Heav'n, and aiding Heav'n's great cauſe,
While he reſtores from Pharoah's ſpacious reign
To promis'd realms, his long exiled train.
The bite of ſerpents and their pois'nous breath
Strew his pale wand'rers on the verge of death.
But quick he bids a brazen ſerpent rear
Its ſpiry volumes in the middle air;
At it directs the ſickly groupe to gaze,
As ſure and whole reſtorative of eaſe.

A bird in figure lays her entrails bare
And with her life ſhe feeds her new hatch'd care.

All fond of blood their mother's breaſt ſurround,
And with contending bills probe deep the wound.

Thus having traced the wonders of the ſcene:
The Hero full of thought departs the fane:
But ſcarce had touch'd the Temple's ſpacious ſtairs
When tumult in loud clamor wounds his ears:
Amid the crowd, behold Suſanna's led,
The youthful bride of old Manaſſes's bed.
Pale are her features, beamleſs are her eyes,
And down her back her hair diſorder'd lies.
Averſe, indignant, in her bloom of charms,
Her father plung'd her in the old man's arms.
But now the ſtaining of the nuptial ſtate
Dooms her unhappy to a public fate.
And here the vulgar, here the youths prepare
To whirl the ſtones againſt the guilty fair.
But when the prieſt ſaw Chriſt the portals grace
Inſtant he bids the execution ceaſe;
The trembling matron from the crowd withdraws,
And veils his baſe deſign in ſmooth applauſe.
This dame (ſays he) has broke the marriage knot
And faithleſs to her bed was baſely caught:
For ſuch a crime, it is by law decreed,
By miſſive ſtones, yet how ſevere! to bleed.
We, Soft interpreter of bards! preſume
To aſk your counſel of this matron's doom.

He ſpoke, and with deluſive hope is fed,
That by his force of ſpeech the Hero's led

Into a ſnare, where all evaſion's vain,
Each paſſage block'd, and flight a fruitleſs pain.
For ſhould his tender nature ſpare the dame,
And wave the death, due to her lawleſs flame,
He'd ſoon upon himſelf the rabble draw,
And ſuffer as the ſcorner of their law:
Yet ſhould he, for the crime, pronounce her fate,
He'd then incur the vulgar's barb'rous hate.
Himſelf the prieſt, for ſuch ſuggeſtions, hails,
And his breaſt ſwells with conqueſt's flattering gales.
Thus while in ſleep the Hind with ſplendent ſhare,
In ridges ſeems the cultur'd glebe to rear,
Huge heaps of gold diſcover'd in the clay,
Vain throbs of gladneſs to his heart convey,
But ſudden flits the viſion of the dream,
And of the golden ſtore ſoon dyes the flame:
Awak'd, he rails at fortune and the ſpoil,
Compell'd to ſtick to poverty and toil.
But God ſhall for himſelf ſtrike out a way,
(A God no human wit can lead aſtray)
At once from death the wretched wife to draw,
And keep alive the ſpirit of the law.
Fix'd on the ground awhile, he rais'd his eyes,
And to the crowd prepar'd for ſlaughter cries;
'Tis true, the ſtatutes which your ſires decreed,
Conſign to death this woman's ſordid deed.
Whoever then a ſinleſs life has led,
Let him firſt whirl the ſtone, and ſtrike her dead.
And can one boaſt among this num'rous train,
By wounding her, a life without a ſtain?

While thus he ſpoke, his looks, ſeverely ſtrong,
Oblique he glances thro' the waving throng,
In act to write; who ſhould preſume to claim,
In the dame's maſſacre, his ſpotleſs fame?
" A mind unſhock'd by actions baſely done,
" A life crown'd with the palm by virtue won."
Before the crowd the fair ſtands chill'd with fright,
Her eyes ſuffus'd with death's approaching night:
Proſtrate ſhe ſinks beneath her load of care,
Nerveleſs her knees, no leſs diſſolv'd in fear,
Than is the doe, which o'er a length of ground
Purſu'd and breathing the voracious ſound
Of panting dogs, ſees her ſtrength ſmoak in air,
And her limbs captive in the trait'rous ſnare;
Hem'd round with foes, no hope of freedom nigh,
All other views forſake her but to die.

His tender ſpeech among the vulgar glides,
And all their rage of murder ſoon ſubſides:
Each in his mind revolves his actions paſt,
There views a groupe of ills, and ſtands aghaſt.
Among ſo great a train no man ſteps forth
By rectitude of life to prove his worth;
But each, as conſcious of ſome moral ſtain,
By ſtealth lets fall his ſtone and leaves the fane.
And now the porch unchock'd with riot-cries,
Off her bound hands the God the cord unties,
Diſmiſſes her with words, that veil her ſhame.
Depart, let virtue cleanſe thy tarniſh'd fame!

Then his Diſciples thus addreſſing, ſaid,
This race, how hard! how obſtinately bred!
Undar'd leave nothing, judge in each debate,
And always wrong, grow bolder by defeat.
Ev'n me, who violate their feſtive days,
To give them health, and chaſe away diſeaſe;
Tender to thoſe, who weep their ſinful ſtains,
Their guilt to pardon, and avert their pains:
Ev'n me, who give to ſpread the genial feaſt,
And the ſoft guſhing of the vine to taſte,
Setting aſide the lotion of the ſtream,
And gorge on meats for which they blot your fame;
Ev'n me they ſeek by artful fraud to ſlay,
And rouſe all Rome to chaſe me as her prey;
Glad, ſhould I own it lawleſs, that their tribes
The money tax ſhould pay, which Rome preſcribes.
Nor can my deeds above the reach of art,
The leaſt conviction to their breaſts impart;
Blind to the force, by which my acts aſpire,
They dare oppoſe the counſels of my Sire,
Their rites I break not, nor their laws repeal;
For maxims, more ſublime, beneath the veil
Of their dark ceremonies, latent lye,
Than what are offered to the naked eye.
Why is Swine's fleſh (an inſtance to rehearſe)
Amid their various food, forbid a place?
For minds, refin'd with thoughts ſupremely good,
Can catch contagion from no mortal food:
The mind's diſtemper is her baſe deſire,
Yet as the briſtly kind delight in mire,

As in this beaſt an innate lewdneſs roves,
She lives a type of Venus' obſcene loves.
Beſide, by gentler diſcipline to draw
Their ſtubborn minds, to hear celeſtial law;
To fix, whom no religion long could hold,
By bloody ceremonies, in one fold;
The ſupreme BEING bad the tribes prepare
To call, for death, ſome of their bleating care;
The guiltleſs heifer on their ſhrine to wound,
And purple, with her harmleſs blood, the ground.
Theſe rites, to them, if not ſuffus'd with gloom,
Shone types of the religion then to come.

This ſaid, already the declivous ſkies
O'ercaſt with ſhade, the trait'rous town he flies.
And willing now, before his inſtant fate,
To pray his Sire, and ſecret vows repeat.
Unnoticed leaves his friends in Tabor's plains,
And the mount crown'd with lofty cedars gains.
None of the train he order'd to attend,
But Peter, James and John, a faithful friend,
Who meditating ſtand, and to the ſkies
Extend their ſupine hands and piercing eyes.
And now the Son, in flam'd with heav'nly fire,
In extaſy addreſſes thus his Sire.

O father ? ſee, tho' innocent I dye,
And meet the pangs of fate without one ſigh:
Since ſuch your will, and ſuch is your decree.
And ſince mankind is ever dear to me:

Yet, theſe, who left their friends and native ſoil,
The follow'rs of my fortune and my toil,
Indulge propitious; and avert the harm,
Aim'd at their virtue by a lurking arm.
I dread not human hate, nor do they fear;
For impious men ſhall wound them ev'ry where,
Nor ſhall my anger or ſurprize run high,
To ſee them tortur'd, or to ſee them dye;
To ſee you, father, to compleat their woe,
In duſt to ſpurn them, and commence their foe.
No; let your light'ning, if it is your will,
Flaſh fierce around them, or your thunder kill,
If ſuch the toils, that men to heav'n elate
And bring back nature, to her priſtine ſtate;
At leaſt deny not to my pray'r this grace,
Let not of hell's domains the cruel race,
(Whoſe hate to human mortals never dyes)
Deſtroy my ſocial pupils with ſurprize;
Seduce them from their lore with wicked arts,
And pour the love of earth into their hearts;
Nor in the praiſe of vice let their tongues roll,
And ſtrive to blot my Image from the ſoul.
Soon, too ſoon, ſhall theſe inſidious foes
(In whoſe unſated breaſts revenge ſtill glows)
Revolve deceits, o'er baleful projects low'r,
And wear ſtrange forms to ſpread abroad their pow'r;
To ſeize the harmleſs, whom they cannot blame,
And with polluted breath their breaſts inflame.
But fruſtrate, SIRE, their meditated care,
May their curs'd ſchemes evaporate in air,
And bid them conquer'd, to betray forbear.

And when my mortal days ſhall ſet in death,
Give ſome to riſe to teach the ſons of earth,
In the firm path of righteouſneſs to move,
And glow tranſported with religion's love.
Will not paternal fondneſs lend an ear
Propitious to his Son's moſt ardent pray'r?

Your Sire's true Image, and pow'r of his ſkies,
Your fears remove (the heav'nly King replies)
The frauds ſhall ne'er annoy your choſen train,
Which hell now meditates thro' its domain.
Let Satan grim a hundred forms aſſume,
Spread wide his ſnares, and cover thick with gloom;
My preſence ſhall the treachery diſcloſe,
The frauds detect, and diſſipate the foes.
Yet one ſhall fall a prey, thro' whoſe dark ſoul
Baſe plots, already, in diſorder roll:
Now he, unhappy, weary of the pain,
(The ſad reward attendant on your train)
Repents, indignant, of the toils he bore
Sooth'd with the ſweets, which life had given before.

But prior to the world 'twas our decree,
This wretch ſhould fill an Apoſtolic ſee.
Not mindleſs of the bards, who ſung his fall,
A warning great to thoſe, you deign to call.
The reſt, the ſnares ſhall flie by culture free,
And hold life lightly for the love of thee.
Death ſhall not fright them with his dreadful mien,
But find them tranquil when he rules the ſcene:

Watchful of life, and proud of death's embrace,
From their heart's gore ſhall riſe a num'rous race:
Yet after the long paſſion of their fates,
Triumphant they ſhall fill heav'ns vacant ſeats.
Proceed then glorious, and compleat, my Son,
The mighty labour, which you have begun.
From your religion, ſee, what crowds ſhall ſpring;
Unſhaken how their breaſts eſpouſe their King?
Ev'n thoſe, who now relunctantly obey,
Of ſpeech unpoliſh'd, ſhall without delay
Inhale the breathing of the ſpirit-gueſt,
And feel conceptions new diſtend the breaſt;
In all the pomp of language dreſs your law,
And into virtue raptur'd nations awe.
This race extinct, another ſhall ariſe,
And ſpread your name bright kindling to the ſkies;
Your ſtandard fix on the remoteſt ſand,
Where the waves check the further growth of land.
To you ſhall victor kings, in humble pray'r,
Their arms and crowns ſubject, and altars rear,
Majeſtick Rome, whoſe womb with empires heaves,
Who rules, along th'Appenine Tibur's waves;
Vaſt crowds, the faireſt of the cities, ſee,
Her faſces gives and the world's reins to thee:
There with her temple's ſhall religion ſtand,
And cenſers blazing in the Pontiff's hand:
There, ſhall a Prieſt to Kings his law ordain,
And teach the world to praiſe you in a ſtrain.

Yet ſhould, by lapſe of time, the human race,
Their morals with the ſtain of crimes diſgrace,
Should they, by chance, degenerate from their Sires,
And ſtudious tread the walk which vice inſpires;
I will by toils and ſad affection try
To make them fond of virtue, which they flie,
By ills reform'd all mortals mount the ſky.
Oft ſhall the city ravag'd by the foe,
Her ſuperb ſtructures in wide ruin ſtrew,
The more oppreſs'd ſhe feels the hoſtile dread,
The loftier ſhall ſhe raiſe her tow'ry head;
Her walls ſhall riſe, into deſtruction hurl'd,
Nor ſhall ſhe ceaſe till miſtreſs of the world.
Our GODHEAD there ſhall dwell, ſuch is our grace;
He ſaid, and lock'd him in a fond embrace.

But on a ſudden mingling glories riſe,
The thunder rolls and light'nings wrap the ſkies,
The Sire omnipotent expands a cloud,
Bedrop'd with luſtre dazzling to behold.
All ſpace glows bright: now Chriſt, rapt in a wind,
On high is borne, and in the cloud enſhrin'd.
The God, the true reſemblance of his Sire,
Like the pure eſſence of ethereal fire,
Burſts through his viſage; while his frame exhales
A fragrant ſweetneſs on the balmy gales.
Nor leſs effulg'd his beauty on the ſight,
(The Ether bathing with unuſual light)
Than when the matin ſun, bright font of day,
The heav'ns o'erflows with his irriguous ray,

The ſeas reflect his Image in the waves,
And with his gold, groves tinge their ſaffron leaves.
His wond'ring friends the Hero radiant ey'd,
Two bards attending, one on either ſide;
The one, on flaming chariot rais'd ſublime,
Gliding along the heav'ns aerial clime.
The other, leader of an exil'd band,
Once led the Jewiſh ſlaves from Egypt's land.
To civilize the tribes preſcrib'd a law,
And fram'd new rites, to worſhip God with awe.
The heav'ns ſeem now to ſpread their portals wide,
And pour their glory in a radiant tide:
Then from a cloud on fire with golden ſtains;
His Son within his arms Jehovah ſtrains;
And ſailing on the Zephir's ſcented wings,
A liquid voice this ſacred meaſure ſings;
" Behold my ſon, behold my joy ſupreme,
" Hear him ye nations and revere his name!"
The voice here ceaſed: in heav'n the winged throng
Unite their gladneſs in a choral ſong.
At length the Hero drops his heav'nly air,
Moves to his friend, ſepulchr'd deep in fear,
Wakes them diſſolv'd in wonder of the ſcene,
And lives among them in his mortal mien.

End of the Firſt Book.

ARGUMENT of the Second Book.

Alarm'd at the honours paid to Chriſt, and inſpir'd by Demons with malice againſt him, the Prieſts and Leaders of the city repair by night to the Temple, to deliberate how to oppoſe and deſtroy the Lord. Mean time Satan aſſuming the garb and mien of Joras, endeavours to withdraw Judas from Chriſt's party, and betray him to his foes. Nicodemus, one of the Fathers of the Council, harangues in favour of Chriſt, for which he is baniſhed. Then Caiphas riſes and animates the people againſt the Redeemer.—The tribes are enumerated, who come to Jeruſalem at this time, to attend and participate of the PASCHAL Feaſt. Chriſt alſo comes with the ſame intent, and after having perform'd the rites of the ſeaſon, he inſtitutes the Lord's ſupper, waſhes his Diſciple's feet, and foretells the treaſon of Judas, and the denial of Peter. Retiring to mount Olivet, he is bath'd in a bloody ſweat; and here Judas betrays him, and delivers him to a ruffian-band, who conduct him to Caiphas, in whoſe houſe Peter denies his Maſter. In the morning he is brought to Pilate, who confines him as a priſoner in his palace, to ſave him from the inſults of the rabble.

THE

THE

CHRISTIAD.

BOOK II.

BUT blind with fear, and anxious for the ſtate,
The Sages and the Flamens ſleepleſs waſte
The live-long night; their heart-corroding care
Forbids their eyes the balm of reſt to ſhare.
For on their minds, in laſting colours ſhone
The Hero's entry in the joyful town:
The feſtive honours, paid by youthful choirs;
The growing rev'rence, which his name acquires;
The climes, which fame o'erſhadows with her wings,
And where the wonders of his actions ſings.
What can they do? each hour, more clear the lays
Unfold, once ſung by bards in ancient days:
"A King, ſhou'd come, who boaſts in heav'n his birth,
"And dwells a man, among the ſons of earth;"
At whoſe approach, the Temple's ſacred wall,
And proud Judea's regal ſtate ſhou'd fall;
Her altars broke, the Temple ſhou'd deplore,
Her rites extinct, and off'rings brought no more.
With ſuch thoughts gloomy, and with fear o'ercome,
Each lurks, obſcurely ſad, in his clos'd dome.

The Bees, thus wont to range the fields in ſhow'rs,
And ſip the country, kindled wide with flow'rs;
When winter's rage, Ether's offus'd plains
With miſts diſtends, and wat'ry Orion reigns:
A tedious leaſure paſs, deep plung'd in hives,
Hum their concern and ſluggiſh waſte their lives.

The time when ſleep bedews the limbs with reſt,
And ſoft oblivion lulls the tortur'd breaſt:
Ghaſtly to view, black forms from hell's deep ſhade
Emerge, and in dread troops the town invade.
Some the high tow'rs with ſooty wings imbrown;
And ſome the temple's airy ſummit crown:
Whole troops thro' ſtreets and domes their preſence wing,
And from the roofs in cluſter'd Myriads cling.
In Spring, the Birds thus, o'er a length of ſea,
To fair Italia bend their airy way;
Perch on ſome iſland, which repoſe firſt brings,
Fill the wide ſhore, and reſt their weary wings.
Secret, they drop a poiſon in the breaſt,
Then breath a vip'rous ſpirit in the gueſt:
Hence hate engenders, furies headlong roll,
And to all vices, mold the faſhion'd ſoul.
Some ſtalk abroad, belied in human form,
With various fame * the raging town alarm,
The houſes fill, and of a direful kind,
Bid dreams ſtart up, and haunt the drowſy mind:
Some to the manſions of the nobles go,
And ſummon all their force to hurt the foe;

Spread true and falſe reports with fraudful ſkill
And their ſtun'd minds with drear ideas fill: 50
That Chriſt ſtands threat'ning on the holy place,
And that in fire the ſhrines and temples blaze.
Others in prieſtly robes the fathers call,
To meet in council in the temple's wall;
While the fell tyrant of th' infernal ſtate,
Diſcloſes broad the brazen ſounding gate.
Tho' ſcatter'd in the town, each leader's dome,
Yet they, thro' night's obſcure, ſpontaneous roam,
From various parts purſue their gloomy way,
And to the Temple ruſh without delay. 60
Shou'd ſleepleſs fame, thus, in the night ariſe,
And ſing the city enter'd by ſurprize,
Within the walls the foe their armies pour,
Burn down the houſes, and invade the tow'r;
Soon ſwells the mob; the road with tumult glows; 65
Nor know the throng, from what the tumult roſe:
Terrifick furies from their eye-balls gleam,
And from the domes the tapers faintly beam.
Rage leads the rout; while torches pour a ray,
To ſhew the ghaſtly horrors of diſmay: 70
Still ſecret rolls the ſprings whence flows the fray,
Their minds to rage, their breaſts to hate a prey.

Mean while, twelve ſprites are order'd to eſſay,
To draw Chriſt's twelve diſciples from his ſway;
But theſe, (forewarn'd, by his preſcient care, 75
Of the falſe project, and deſtroying ſnare:)

Their minds maintain, by error's ſcheme unaw'd,
And their breaſts bar'd to all the wiles of fraud;
The foes aſſume an hundred ſhapes in vain,
O'er the diſciples' captive minds to reign.
Yet one devoted to the bonds, they wave,
Iſcariot Judas ſinks into their ſlave.
This peſt and ſcandal of the choſen band,
Once rang'd with them, to act the God's command;
His fortune left, his friends, and native ſoil,
To ſhare his exile, and his travelling toil;
Ready from ev'ry vein his blood to draw,
To promulgate the ſupreme Sovereign's law.
But ſoon grown weary of his holy care,
His enterprize ſeem'd hard, his toil ſevere,
And raging, that no fruits his toil attend,
In ſilence waſtes whole days, to put an end
To the ſubmiſſion, which the ſtatutes charge,
And then indulge his priſtine life at large;
Impatient of fatigue, and loth to bear
The joyleſs lot of poverty ſevere,
To drop his province, he low'rs now in ſchemes,
Now ſlight delights, now other projects frames.
Thus wreck'd with cares, and tott'ring now in thought,
Him the black leader of the cohort ſought,
With no leſs joy; than when the lion ſpies,
(His jaws with hunger dry, and wild his eyes)
Not far a deer, along the mountains ſide,
Seeking the paſture, where the vales ſubſide.

Now clad in Gallilean Joras' air,
(By blood was Joras to falſe Judas dear)
He thus accoſts him as he ſleepleſs lay;
Ah! ſay, unhappy, why you nightly ſtray
The mountains drear, why in loud tempeſts chill
And waſte your manhood at a maſter's will,
Who (how great's the frenzy, which your mind excites)
Dares boldly to fruſtrate our holy rites:
Whom none attend, but outcaſts of the land,
A female mob, and ſemiviral band.
Our nobles with concordant anger riſe,
Devoting him to death a ſacrifice:
He, ſoon, for all his holy rage ſhall pay,
And all his boaſted courage fume away;
Then his feign'd glory of rewards ſhall fade,
And his thick clouds of cunning drop no aid:
While his fine arts expiring round him lye.
Riſe then, and from th' impending carnage flie.

This ſaid, his borrow'd figure melts in air,
Transfixing Judas' breaſt with rage and fear:
Hence in his mind infernal thoughts preſide,
And his pulſe beats convulſive with its tide;
Now he revolves, the labours which he bore,
And of his dangers paſt the frightful ſtore;
With ſin's polluted love now frantick glows,
Fix'd to betray the Sov'reign to his foes.
Ah Wretch! deaf to the Godhead's moving gale,
His preſence nor your eyes nor ears inhale!

Yet view yourſelf, how chang'd, beſet with woe;
How high, your eminence! your fall, how low!
What error in vile ſchemes your mind employs;
And feel your heart, corrupt with worldly joys.
The lot you forfeit, future men ſhall prize,
When thouſand ſec'lar ſuns ſhall gild the ſkies.
The wiſh, you cheriſh, and the hope, you feed;
The joy, which ſparkles, of your future deed,
Into diſorder ſoon ſhall hurl your mind,
And fleeting vaniſh like a guſt of wind.
While time permits, then, caſt theſe peſts away,
Which deep corroding on your vitals prey.

And now the Prieſts and Fathers of the ſtate,
Retir'd to the Temple's inmoſt ſeat:
When Caiphas prime prieſt (around whoſe head
Their myſtic rites the ſacred fillets ſpread)
Aſcends the throne in blazing colours dreſt:
According to their rank, ſat down the reſt.
Unbodied ghoſts, impervious to the eye,
On ardent wings around the Senate fly,
Breathe horrid fury through the panting ſoul,
And in confuſion bid the paſſion's roll.
Some voices were, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer death,
Either by publick force, or fraudful ſtealth:
Others for ſanction call'd, the youth to ſlay,
Whom lately Chriſt had rais'd, to viſit day,
From the dark grave; of which the great renown
Soon for him cull'd the rev'rence of the town.
Yet ſtill they fear'd the mob ſhould Chriſt ſuſtain,
Won by his merit, or his gentle mien.

Hence

Here Nicodemus took his ancient place,
Not the laſt noble of the noble race:
Who ſolely free from the infernal peſt
Which gnaw'd infectious ev'ry other breaſt;
Yet loth alone the Senate to oppoſe,
Tho' better maxims in his boſom roſe;
Still once like them, contemning Heav'n's decree,
He ſtrove on Chriſt to vent his enmity:
But when he found his works a God declare,
Like one, call'd forth from night to breathe the air,
His vows in ſecret to the Godhead pays,
Fearful by public homage to diſpleaſe.
But now Chriſt's blood and life are in debate,
And ev'ry ſpeech is pregnant with his fate;
Deep pain'd to hear the innocent condemn'd,
He drop'd the maſk, and ſpoke the public friend.
Fathers, the cauſe of the debate, this night,
Lies not obſcure, for want of proper light:
To ſerve my country then, I will diſcloſe
The real truth, ſhould torments 'round me cloſe:
You muſt all ſee, his actions greater riſe
Than a mere man's, ſupported by the ſkies:
That, by his deeds, he proves himſelf to be,
(If truth can win us) God's own progeny;
The very God, by bards in former days,
(Big with the Godhead, which inſpir'd their lays)
So oft foretold, who ſhould for man expire,
And reconcile him to his mighty Sire.
So far, we, guided by the Prophets, ſay;
Malice can't find a weakneſs in this plea.

On numbers, whoſe dull eyes ſuffus'd with night,
He ſpread the lucid ſparks of viſual light:
On ſome, whoſe ears were from their birth-day bound,
He gave to drink, and pour'd the charms of ſound;
The nerveleſs limbs, o'erſpread with livid ſtains,
The bodies, languid with relentleſs pains;
To theſe, he gave the luſtineſs of ſtrength;
To thoſe, the ſmiles of unexpected health.
Three has he rais'd (the wonders fame has ſpread)
To breathe the ſkies, once number'd with the dead:
The late rais'd Laz'rus was the people's theme,
And thro' the city, ſtill vibrates his name;
Weak then the mind is, and obſcure the heart,
That would ſuch virtue try to draw from art:
Such wonders flow not from mechanic laws;
Behold a God! a God alone's the cauſe.
As oft as he pronounc'd an heav'nly ſtrain,
So oft with cunning fraught our words prov'd vain:
Combin'd, he ſhould in death our fury feel,
Our ſtones we pointed, and we edged our ſteel;
Wrapt in a cloud, he ſudden mounts the ſky,
And hoſts of guardian ſpirits round him fly:
So ſhines the God; who can his vows refuſe?
Tho' met for ill, let's riſe for public uſe;
Approach whom Heav'n had ſent, to ſave by Grace,
Our faults confeſs, and ſuppliant ſue for peace.

While thus he ſpeaks, and warm rehears'd the ſame,
He adds a freſher violence to their flame,
Strikes

Strikes out intenſer furies in the ſoul,
And tides of anger thro' their ſenſes roll.
At length the rage, which inward boiling lay,
Obſcuring reaſon's intellectual ray,
Suffuſing on the mind a heavy cloud,
Againſt him burſts, in exclamations loud.
Thus in a brazen tube a ball glows red,
And burns the fiercer, as with ſulphur fed;
Confin'd too much, it rolls on ev'ry ſide,
And finds no flight but through a flaming tide:
At laſt the ſulphur melts into a flame,
And the wing'd ball flies in a ſmoaky ſteam
With ſuch a crack, as if heav'n's axis broke;
The domes and turrets tumble at its ſtroke;
Its flight the ball with death and carnage ſtrows,
And opes an ample paſſage through the foes.
So on him they with furious anger frown,
Expell'd their temple, and exil'd the town.

Then Caiphas, while rage was mute confin'd,
Aroſe, and ſpoke the dictates of his mind:
By artful wiles allur'd, no doubt (he ſaid)
This Nicodemus to the foe has fled;
Who often ſuffer'd in his country's cauſe,
And dar'd maintain the ſanction of her laws:
Who late in all the pomp of language roſe,
To ſtop the rapid progreſs of our foes.
But ſuch's the magic of the hoſtile tongue,
That, they, who hear, are by the ſound undone:

Shall we believe him come from heav'n's high choir
To ſave, who impious boaſts our God his Sire:
Who in the havock of our law delights,
And toils to fix a new parade of rites:
Whoſe advent, he aſſerts, ſhall fatal be
To this great Temple, which, by God's decree,
Our anceſtors had built, with ſo much toil,
And decorated with barbarian ſpoil?
What's the religion which nov'lty can frame?
Can morals pure from ſuch religion ſtream?
Still he, leſt any crime ſhould lye untried,
The guilty joins, and deals his pardons wide:
To their baſe doors his ſteps impure conveys,
And ſcorns our antient rite of feſtal days.
As he deſerves, the vile ſeducer treat,
Haſte, ſpread your ſnares, and drag him to his fate.
Extinguiſh, citizens, his growing fire,
Leſt flames victorious to your domes aſpire,
Wind round your columns in a lambent train,
And o'er the airy ſummit blazing reign;
Elſe ſhall he gain the city with his arts,
And with ſedition warp the people's hearts:
Elſe ſoon the country round ſhall be the prize,
Of his falſe wonders, and prodigious lies:
Religion elſe, which many ages ſway'd,
Shall into nothing, with her altars, fade:
I fear that Rome, the inſult to repay,
The priv'lege we enjoy, ſhall take away;
By her dejected, ſoon compell'd to roam
Far from our country and our native home.

Let ONE die then for all, and expiate
The ſins of many, and ſecure from fate:
Such be the gen'ral voice, and thus ſhall we
The homage pay due to his Deity.

This ſaid, the Fathers own'd the penal choice,
And each approv'd it with a furious voice.
But on the means while roll'd the deep debate,
In ſecret to allure him to his fate:
Amaz'd, they ſee, before them Judas ſtand
Withdrawn unnotic'd from the choſen band:
Aw'd they receive him looking fiercely great,
And 'mid their Nobles offer him a ſeat;
Ardent demand of his approach the cauſe,
And then to hear, in throbbing ſilence pauſe.

Then Judas, throwing round his glaring eyes,
Fathers, I know, you dread the rage (thus cries)
Of our Galilean, who ſpurns your laws,
And is of your ſage council now the cauſe:
But, tell the price, and I'll aſſume the pain,
(Which now employs your tortur'd thoughts in vain)
To give him to your rage an eaſy prey,
Before the ſetting of this new-born day.

Twice fifteen ſilver coins, with joyful ſpeed,
They count, a huge reward for ſuch a deed!
Gladly attend his egreſs from the fane;
He ſeeks the mountain, and rejoins the train.

Kept ſacred in the town, and on the plains,
A ſolemn feaſt about this ſeaſon reigns:
Sev'n ſuns their holy joy and leiſure ſee,
According to Religion's old decree:
Sev'n ſuns behold their feſtive tables ſpread,
(But yet forbid the uſe of leaven'd bread)
With the ſheep's offspring, and with haſty cakes,
And all the herbal pomp of rural feaſts.
This day, with joy memorial, they relate,
Their ancient Sires had left th'Egyptian ſtate;
Had paſs'd ſecure, thro' the ſea's bluſhing tide,
Enrich'd with many ſpoils, and Heav'n their guide.
To view the regal town, vaſt numbers riſe
From ev'ry part, and ſhare the ſacrifice:
Nor in confuſion they the highway trod,
But each tribe march'd beneath their Leader's nod.
Tho' 'mong the Iſra'lites, their blood's the ſame,
The ſame their laws, and from one ſtock they came,
The nation ſtill into twelve tribes divide,
And ſpread o'er Paleſtine their numbers wide:
A nation in the cauſe of freedom bold,
Their towns in numbers ſtrong, and rich in gold:
But at this time, their country ſoil expell'd,
Were diſtant far, and Caſpia's mountains held.
Amid the tribes ſcarce one with freedom reigns;
For tho' the Benjamites poſſeſs their plains;
Tho' the great offspring of fam'd Judah's race,
In wealth and arms ſupport the higheſt place;
Still both, ſubdued by Rome's victorious bands,
Enlarge her empire by their conquer'd lands;

Their arms and ſceptre render as her prize;
Their laws preſerving and their ſacrifice:
Now weeps the land, where lofty turrets roſe;
And peopled cities dreadful to their foes,
Are now in aſhes laid by hoſtile rage,
Or noding by the mould'ring hand of age.
Jehovah thus againſt them flaſh'd his ire,
Nor ſaw, without revenge, his Son expire.
But ſhall I ſee the land inglorious lye,
Without a ſong, to ſoothe their miſery;
Behold the nation and her name forgot,
Unknown to after ages ev'n in thought?
The verſe is due, as Chriſt his infant-cries
Amid them rais'd, and walk'd beneath their ſkies.

Wherefore ye Myriads of the cryſtal round,
Who o'er th'Olympic azure lightly bound;
Who often gliding thro' the fields of air,
Our country viſit, and our tables ſhare;
Deſcend propitious, and vouchſafe to guide
My ſteps, that wander o'er the country wide:
Let's bring to light the ancient names that fade
Beneath the horrors of oblivion's ſhade;
Bid fame preſerve alive their wither'd bow'rs,
Their towns demoliſh'd, and their nodding tow'rs.
Then ſoaring with you on a rapid wing,
This earth I'll leave, and ſcenes immortal ſing:
With you thro' pathleſs ether ſhall I fly,
And tread the lucid pavement of the ſky.
Thron'd in my chariot, I ſhall pour a ſong,
To chaſe the clouds, and charm the ſtarry throng;

Thro' walks untrod by mortals, largely breathe, 365
And pluck'd from Ether's brow, bear back a wreath.
But firſt, before this glorious height we gain,
Let's tell the numbers thronging to the fane.

Before this time, ſuch throngs ne'er uſed to wait,
On theſe great rites, nor crowd the temple's gate; 370
Nor ſacrifice alone ſuch numbers drew,
But a fond impulſe urg'd them Chriſt to view.
Great Judah's offspring firſt the temple grace,
For ancient monarchs an illuſtrious race!
This tribe, above the reſt, ſuperior ſtood, 375
In arms and men, as ruler of the wood;
The lion fierce his fellow-beaſts exceeds
In energy of ſtrength and valiant deeds.
Crowds pour from Saba, and from Gaza's ſhore,
Engada's left with her vindemial ſtore. 380
The towns Andulis, Lyde, Raphan low,
Selis, Jamnia, where fierce tempeſts blow;
Hippa, Aſcalon, with Azotus' tow'rs,
Acharon, Sachon, and where Joppa low'rs
With waves tempeſtuous rolling to her bay, 385
And with her rocks rough-riſing o'er the ſea;
Are all deſerted by their num'rous train,
Marching in holy ſquadrons to the fane.

Next with Damaſcus' ſons glows warm the way,
Where (ſo fame reports) of prolific clay, 390

The firſt man form'd, and in exiſtence new,
With frame erect, the vernal Zephyrs drew.
Sad ſits Emaus, deſerted by her crowds;
And ſilence blank the front of Nepſe clouds:
Anthedon bord'ring on th'Egyptian reign,
And Bethlem, Chriſt's birth-place, attend their train.
Galgala with Beſſura ſadly low'rs,
And Marathon ſtands ſad with Erme's tow'rs.
As mute in all her houſes Sigor's grown,
As the unhappy woman chang'd to ſtone;
Who, turning back to view Gomorrah glow,
Stands ſtiff in ſalt, a monument of woe.
The neighb'ring villas ſend away their band,
Where burns Aſphaltus o'er a length of land;
Spouts tow'ring to the ſkies a lambent flame,
And the air charges with a ſulphureous ſteam.
Here corn once ſmil'd and roſes early born,
Now ſleeps the pool, and ragged grows the thorn:
This fatal change by monſtrous love was wrought,
For by the angels' youth and beauty caught,
The natives thought by force to make them ſtay,
And to devote them to their luſt a prey;
Slaves they might be, had they not wing'd their flight,
And with their plumage gain'd the fields of light:
But in loud thunder flam'd the ſupreme SIRE,
And delug'd all their plains in floods of fire:
With aſhes ſqualid, barren lye their ſeats,
Fruitleſs their lawns, and pathleſs their retreats.
The trees here crown'd with flow'ry bloſſoms reign,
By ſwains deſir'd, and by the virgin train;

But when the ſouth pours out its floods of air,
And the ripe buds in fruitage diſappear ;
Apples with ſhaggy rinds the branches ſtore,
The ſwains deſire, and virgins long no more :
Yet ſound and ſolid ſwell they on the eye,
But touch'd burſt uſeleſs, and in aſhes lye :
Ev'n the ripe ſheaves ſwept o'er by blaſting gales,
Drop on their ſtalks and the whole harveſt fails.

The tribe, who follow, Simeon's lineage boaſt,
And dwell in Saro, and Moloda's coaſt ;
Enjoy the crops which Sicelegis yields,
And the fat moiſture of Sipabota's fields.
All whom the brow of Aſanes confines,
And Atharis' aſcent bedew'd with wines :
Whom Remmon feeds, and Ain's cultur'd hills;
Where fair Idume with its towns diſtills
Her frankincenſe, and where the plains around
Breathe the ſweet gales, that ſkim Arabia's ground.
The race of Iſachar with ardour loud,
The temple enter, and the altar crowd ;
Content with meals ſpread thin by nature's hand,
And with the circle of their narrow land.
Next come, whom the Hermonian mountains feed,
Of bees the nurs'ry, and the neighing ſteed :
And who the ſloping ſide of Tabor tread,
And breathe where Carmel points his rocky head.
Here in a fiery chariot thron'd on high,
The Prophet roſe, and reach'd the purer ſky.
Now Senſena void of her children ſtands,
And on the road Hennad pours forth her bands;

While noble Affra all her ſons unlocks,
Once thirſty cities, built ſublime on rocks;
Senus with Rebotes their train reſign,
And Remetes inſpers'd with fruit and wine.

The tribe of Dan ſlow move the town along,
And ſadly ſeek the temple with the throng;
Thus when ſtern Winter ſharpens Autumn's breeze,
And threats to ſhake the verdure of the trees,
The ſnake begins his flight to meditate,
And glide with ſilent lapſe to his retreat.
No hiſs betrays him, while he ſoft retires,
Nor o'er the rocks erects his tail in ſpires.
They ſeem in pain, ſad with the Prophets ſong,
That one ſhould monſtrous riſe among their throng,
Who ſhould the character of Chriſt profane,
And mark with crimes and blood his impious reign:
This terror of mankind ſhall then arrive,
When man ſhall be to ev'ry crime alive;
When ſhortly after, the laſt fire ſhall prey,
On nature's frame, and melt it quite away.
But God's true offspring, to confirm his reign,
Shall riſe vindictive with an heav'nly train,
Toſs the vain boaſter in a whirlwind round,
And plunge him deep into the yawning ground.

To theſe ſucceed a troop in graces young,
From the illuſtrious blood of Aſher ſprung:
Each taught by cuſtom, a wheat'n chaplet wears,
And on their temples nod the bearded ears,
Theſe

Theſe Balagus and Horma ſtrew with grain,
And Aphega's high domes thoſe entertain ;
A part Robœa ſends and Ama's fields,
Nor Aziba in ſwarms, nor Laban yields.

Next come with gifts Zabulon's feſtive hoſt,
Who dwell beſide fair Pontus' ſea-girt coaſt ;
Theſe ſet the ſhore on fire with myrtle light,
And ſheets of flame ſtream on the face of night.
A part proceed from Jeptha's rural ſeat,
And crowds from Jedaba's high ſtructures haſte.
Then Cana came, which wond'ring ſaw the ſtream,
It's nature change, and with wine's bluſhes flame.
Their natal Naz'reth ſome with joy recite,
And lofty Sembros handed ſome to light :
Naim her thouſands pours, where once from death
The youth aroſe, and breath'd a vital breath :
Dotha with Natole in numbers ſtrong,
And high Cathetia mourn their wand'ring throng.

But who can tell Naphthali's num'rous tribe,
Their crowds of cities and their tow'rs deſcribe ?
Which on the rugged hills of cedar riſe,
Or holy Lebanus tip'd with the ſkies :
Who in great Naphthali and Naſon dwell,
Bleſs'd with the love of truth and ſpeaking well.
Who live upon the banks of Jordan's courſe,
His ſtreams freſh bubbling from a double ſource.
All Galilee of ſight inſatiate comes,
And all Samaria guardleſs leaves her domes :

Jehovah's offspring often here delay'd,
And oft his Godhead by his works diſplay'd;
Aſſeda with Caperna found their fame,
And the old town which Greeks Sebaſte name.
Crowds Bethel leave, and Beſſa's ſublime tow'rs,
And where Geneſara her waters pours.

The race of Levi mix with ev'ry band,
Nor are confin'd to any tract of land,
But by the Legiſlator giv'n to ſtray,
Among the people, and their victims ſlay,
To load their altars with the bloody ſpoil,
And call down plenty on their cultur'd ſoil.

Manaſſes not content with the domain,
Which o'er the river's bank enjoy his train,
Reigns wide, where Nepheca expanded lyes,
And Berſa ringing with the hunter's cries;
For him ſpreads Tenachos her lowing fields,
To him her ſavage beaſts fierce Dora yields:
The town of Magedos her bands reſigns,
And all the ſparkling treaſures of her mines:
Jebla for him imbrowns his front with woods,
And for him Taphua rolls her ſilver floods;
Where laſting ſpring her balmy dew diſtills,
And meadows live refreſh'd with gurgling rills.
Then they, who dwell beyond clear Jordan's flood,
Their veins vibrating with Manaſſes blood,
Succeed; the toilſome dreſſers of the plain,
The lib'ral ſowers of the fruitful grain.

God's offspring alſo the parade increaſe,
Conjoin'd with hoary Reuben's num'rous race.
(Reuben once famous for the warrior's rage,
And of his father's ſons the firſt in age)
As once, they wiſh'd their country were the ſame,
Beyond the river's far tranſlucent ſtream,
(Fields once, by men of monſtrous ſtature, trod,
And trembling under their tyrannic nod)
So now their tribes combin'd in one appear,
The ſame their entry, and the ſame their pray'r.
To them belong, who dreſs Argobia's land,
And they, who dwell beſide Beſania's ſtrand:
Or whom, thy ſhade, O Galadine, imbrowns,
Or live in Ogg's twice thirty conquer'd towns;
Or whom Galatia in her towns contains
Jabis, Sebama, built on level plains:
Balme, Romatha, Selca, and Nabe,
Eſdren with half demoliſh'd Cariathe;
Theſe names unknown are now ſupplied with new,
Tho' on fame's plumage, once they diſtant flew.
His train Arimene ſends with cedars crown'd,
Their brows with leaves, with arms their ſhoulders
ſound,
Whom Gaulis, Rabath, Boſoris contain:
Who till with oxen rich Balthaltis plain,
On whom high Arnon pours his waters down,
And whom Abilla's meads with herbage crown.
Nor ſhall you mow unſung green Elcale's turf,
Aſerot, Eſebon with huge rocks rough,

Nor you, who make Eſonia's fields your care,
And Cade's wilds, ſhall want of fame your ſhare.
Whom Phaſga's bounds incloſe, approach the band,
With all the town ſpread thin, o'er Hermus' land.
Abaris comes next, from whoſe lofty ſide
The ſhepherds Jordan ſaw his ſtreams divide,
On either bank; in air erect his wave,
And a dry channel for the Iſr'lites leave,
When to the promis'd land they bent their courſe,
Calling his headlong tide back to its ſource.

Laſt come the Benjamites who ſtudious toil
The neighb'ring villas fruitful in their ſoil,
Where fair Jeruſalem, Queen of the land,
Jarephila and Luza's turrets ſtand:
And Bethany, who ſaw her King, in death
Four days compreſt, inhale his vital breath:
Samar and Sarcla, the number ſwell,
And who in Gabaoth crown'd with maſtic dwell,
To the wild rage of ſavage beaſts a prey,
For which her youth advance in rough array,
Dreſs'd in the ſhaggy wolves' victorious ſpoils,
Torn by the hounds or captives in the toils:
Her luſty ſons riſe with the pearly dawn,
Break thro' the wood, or pour along the lawn;
And when the evening veils the heav'ns blue ſpace,
They eaſe their ſhoulders and divide the chaſe,

And ſcatter'd gladful o'er their native fields,
Revel in feaſts, on what their labour yields: 590
They join the tribe who breathe in Maſpha's town,
And Hemen's rocky hills which threat'ning frown;
Whom Recen and Berathis tow'rs contain,
And Shyla's holy with her humble fane.
Nor Avin, Amaſa refuſe their throng, 595
Nor Sela, nor expanded Helephon.
Crowds flow from Rhama pierced with Rachel's cries,
Myriads from Jericho and Gabeon riſe,
Whoſe natives ſaw, 'tis ſung, the ſun ſtand ſtill,
(Submiſſive to their Leader's mighty will) 600
And ling'ring long, forgetful of his way,
Slow from their hemiſphere withdraw the day.
Among this band, ſuperior to the reſt,
A youth appears in crimſon beauty dreſt,
From venerable Saul he draws his name, 605
And with the ſage's blood his veins rich ſtream:
In language potent and in action bold,
Him hoary bards unanimous foretold.
But while bewilder'd in dark error's maze,
Againſt the truth what furies ſhall he raiſe! 610
But when the God ſhall glide into his breaſt,
Repel the darkneſs and remain his gueſt,
Then ſhall the youth with an illumin'd mind,
Ardent diffuſe his lectures on mankind,
Waft through the world religion on his breath, 615
And deeply tinge her beauty with his death.

The town now full of Iſrael's twice ſix tribes,
To pay the homage which the time preſcribes,
And conſecrate the days with feſtive praiſe,
To his diſciples Chriſt thus gently ſays. 620
Soon will the light begin to ſtreak the Eaſt,
When ev'ry houſe ſhall brighten with a feaſt:
Among you who ſhall to the town firſt tend,
In ſearch of ſome rich one, the poor man's friend;
Who may, before my fate, with us delight 625
To ſhare the banquet, and the annual rite?
Nor long your ſearch: you'll ſee a boy return
From the clear fountain with a brimful urn;
Obſerve his motions, keep him ſtill in view,
And to the houſe he tends, his ſteps purſue: 630
Aſk, in my name, the maſter to afford
A chapel ſacred to the feſtive board.
A ſpacious hall, on fire with liquid gold,
And hung with tapeſtry, he'll ſoon unfold;
There on the tables ſpread the ſacred meat, 635
There my companions' and my preſence wait.

He ſaid; Peter and John the word obey,
And to the city bend without delay;
Along the city they uncertain roam;
But quickly ſpy a boy returning home, 640
With a full urn from a neigb'ring ſource:
Soon after him, they bend their haſt'ning courſe,
Thro' various windings, cloſe his footſteps trace,
And with him enter to his manſion-place.

Hither, illuſtrious for his ancient race,
And for his ſeven ſons of manly grace,
Simon repair'd, join'd by his filial train,
When for the town he left the verdant plain.
Beyond the honours, which the city yields,
His joy was ſtill to breathe his native fields;
To lye at large beneath his wood-land ſhades;
To ſee the waters purling thro' his meads;
To view his farm productive as his vows,
Dreſs'd by the labour of an hundred ploughs.
Tho' old, he pour'd the verſe, and touch'd the ſtring,
Beſide a river or a flow'ry ſpring;
And vers'd in all blue Ether's various ways,
Into hereafter rapt, he told in lays
The ſigns, which might the huſbandman inform
Of heat approaching, or the chilling ſtorm:
Provide againſt the blazing Sun's deſigns,
And all the labours, which the Moon divines.
He gain'd the town, religious in parade,
To paſs the days by cuſtom ſolemn made:
And while the rites, the ſervants' care require,
He wakes the inſpiration of the lyre:
The cords beneath his fingers ſoftly thrill,
Or ſwell harmonious to his ivory quill,
And in bold ſounds reſponſive to the wires
He ſings the actions of his glorious Sires:
But chiefly from the origin he draws
Of all theſe banquets and their rites the cauſe;

But as his numbers gently glide along
Peter arrives and interrupts the ſong:
We have a King, ſays he, called Chriſt by name, 675
To none inferior in a pious fame,
Who bade us come, and aſk an humble ſeat,
Sacred to rites and decent for a feaſt.

When Simon heard, new joys dilate his breaſt,
And all his doors flie open to his gueſt. 680
Without delay, he orders to illume,
With wood Arabian, ev'ry ample room;
Then in the mid, he ſhews a vaulted hall,
Where pictur'd tapeſtry informs the wall;
Where the floor bluſhes with luxurious dyes, 685
And ivory beds on ſilver bed-ſteads riſe;
Of gold each diſh is fram'd, and ev'ry vaſe;
And thro' the manſion gold and ſilver blaze.
Then thus he ſpoke; let him our manſion ſhare:
Before this time his name has reach'd our ear, 690
Yet tho' his virtue on fame's plumage flies,
His voice ne'er bleſs'd my ears, nor mien my eyes:
But here his coming and his preſence wait,
I'll order ſome to guide him to this ſeat:
And I could wiſh, he'd fix his dwelling here, 695
And all th'indulgence of this palace ſhare;
Then might I boaſt the honour to my race,
And they point out with joy the ſacred place.
But let the verſe, by your approach untold,
The juſt applauſes of our Sires unfold, 700

While earth with night's ſoft dew-drops humid lies,
And darkneſs ſheds her ſable from the ſkies.

He ſaid; his voice accordant to the ſtrings,
From the ſoft concert rapture melting brings;
Thro' all his ſtrains ſuch vivid colours bloom,
As paint can boaſt, or texture of the loom.
For lo! his numbers lead from Pharaoh's reign
Thro' various realms the baniſh'd Hebrew-train:
Wave high in air the wandering Leader's wand,
Obedient to whoſe touch the billows ſtand;
Their rigid waters roll on either ſide,
And in the midſt the tribes attend their guide;
From moiſture free his daring footſteps tread,
And without ſailing paſs thro' Ocean's bed,
Behind them Egypt ſends her ſons in ſwarms,
Elate in chariots and illumed with arms:
The further ſhore obtained, they view the foe,
And ſeek the woods, that on the margin grow.
Again their Hero waves his wand around,
And with its holy point light wounds the ground:
Sudden the waters loſe their rigid force,
Diſſolve and ſwallow up the trodden courſe.
The foe, ſurrounded with the rapid tide,
Sees ſwift deſtruction on each billow ride;
Before the ſight, the bodies of men drown'd
Float for a while, then ſeek the ſea's profound.
Horſes with arms, chariots in eddies toſt,
In circles reel and ſink for ever loſt.

The ſupreme Being next becomes his theme,
The great Creator of the world's huge frame:
Who touched with pity, for the hungry bands,
Wandering diſtreſs'd along a waſte of ſands,
From the deep concave of his azure tow'rs,
A heav'nly banquet to the wretched pours.
Like feather'd ſnow the food ſeems in his ſong
To lapſe from Heav'n to earth amid the throng,
Which ſpread at large along the level fields,
Enjoy the Manna, which Heav'n bounteous yields.
Again, the Hero ſends to Heav'n his eyes,
And to a rock's huge height his wand applies:
The rock relents, as conſcious of the blow,
And floods of water from its boſom flow;
Struck with the novel font, each thirſty tribe,
Scoop the freſh waves, and breathleſs draughts imbibe.
To Him, the Lyriſt next his numbers pours,
Who firſt had rear'd Jerus'lem's ſpiry tow'rs;
Paid the firſt offerings of the cultur'd ſeed,
And bade the new invented vine to bleed;
Who rais'd the pomp of altars in the glade,
Built of freſh turf beneath a wild aſh-ſhade.

While all drank deep the muſick of the lyre
Tho' conſcious of the Hebrews' mortal ire,
Still Chriſt the mountain's airy brow deſcends,
And to the city's hateful portals tends:
And now the ſun ſhot down the azure plain,
When he had gain'd the palace with his train;

Where all things ſparkle with a regal taſte,
And the board glows odorous with the feaſt.
Amid the gueſts, with well diſſembled face,
Breathing feign'd love, Judas aſſumes his place.
And now the Hero takes into his hand
The pureſt bread and breaks it 'mong his band.
The wine then blending with the recent ſtream,
He conſecrates it to the Pow'r ſupreme.
And as he dealt the holy cakes, he ſaid,
My Body's real Image is this bread:
Then cried, diſtributing the purple flood,
This cup's the real Image of my Blood,
Which to my Sire I'll pour a victim ſlain,
To waſh away mankind's infectious ſtain:
When you ſhall drain this cup or taſte this meat,
The ſeries of my death commemorate.
Such honours to my torments ſhall be paid,
And their ſad memory ſhall never fade.

He ceas'd to utter more: and from that day,
Mankind, ſubmiſſive to the mandate, pay
The holy homage: and inſtead of beaſts,
By ancients ſlain for ſacrifical feaſts,
On altars conſecrate, with rites divine,
The bread myſterious and the ſacred wine.
By the prieſt's words the God deſcends the ſkies
And veil'd beneath th'Euchariſtic form lies:
God's body hence is offer'd with his gore,
And men the victim religiouſly adore.

Hunger appeas'd, the Hero lays aſide
His ample robe, and ſtudious to provide
The implements of lotion, he firſt diſplays
The towels white; next, fills a caldron's ſpace
With floods of water which vehement aſpire
Above the margin by the ſubject fire;
Then ſcoops the frigid ſtreams, which ſoon aſſuage
The turgid eddies of the boiling rage.
Peter, with his companions in amaze,
Exhorts the Hero from the deed to ceaſe:
But he, deſirous to his train to ſhew
The glory of ſubmiſſion, bending low,
Waſhes their feet, and with the towels dries;
Then pours this ſad addreſs in heavy ſighs.

The night, which I foretold, now mantles earth,
And the day haſtes to ſummon me to death.
I'll leave you, friends, and in my death fulfill
The rigid orders of my Father's will:
There's mid you one, believe what I relate,
Who, fraudful, ſhall betray me to my fate:
The traytor's breaſt the furies now inflame,
And his mind labours with the murd'rous ſcheme.
Can love like mine, be crown'd with ſuch baſe ſpoils?
Is treaſon the reward of all my toils?—
But let the wretch this fatal truth imbibe,
He ſhall not long enjoy his bloody bribe;
Soon ſhall he wiſh he ne'er had drank the day,
Or with his foot-ſteps mark'd life's flow'ry way.
For you, who would my low example try,
In due ſubmiſſion with each other vie;

And while obedience o'er your minds preſide,
Look down ſuperior on the pomp of pride,
Nor ſhall the crew of hell deſiſt this hour
A trembling panic in your breaſts to pour;
The courage, vow'd ſo often, dare to ſhew;
Now bid your ardor flaſh againſt your foe;
With watchful care provide againſt their peſt;
One night at leaſt forbid your eye-lids reſt.

Amaz'd the Hero's prophecy to hear,
One genial ſigh betrays their common fear;
And while, the wretch to know, they feel diſtreſs,
Devoutly Peter offers this addreſs,

Thou, brighteſt ſplendor of the blue ſerene;
Can human breaſts ſuch baſeneſs entertain?
But, where's the man, who dares the crime eſſay?
For, tho' old age has clad my head with grey,
With manly vigour ſtill my blood is warm,
With luſty ſinews ſtill is brac'd my arm,
To take the vengeance to the treaſon due;
He ſaid; and from the ſheath his weapon drew.

Tho' with ſure ſigns, the traytor was reveal'd;
The Hero ſtill their minds with deep night ſeal'd,
Nor would divulge him till his acts betray:
But thus replied to Peter's ſuppliant plea.
This night ſupreme, I ſhall alone remain,
Relinquiſh'd, ſhun'd by all my faithleſs train.

Ev'n you, who now in pomp of language riſe,
Your verboſe courage ſwelling to the ſkies;
Beneath this roof provoking ſtorms to blow,
And ſafely ruſhing on the diſtant foe:
When you ſhall ſee me 'mid the hoſtile train, 845
Inglorious ſhackl'd with the ſervile chain;
Then ſhall you lurk beneath a lying tongue,
And with a trembling flight the danger ſhun:
And when, bedrop'd with dew, the ſable night
Shall o'er the world obtain her middle height, 850
Thrice, me, your Lord, you ſhall deny, afraid
To ſtand the queſtions of an armleſs maid.

Touch'd with the ſpeech, more zealous Peter glows,
And boaſts a courage fearleſs of the foes.
Me to proclaim, ſaid he, a coward, ſpare, 855
'Till from your foe I baſe recede thro' fear.
Let others place their ſafety in their flight,
I ſhall be always preſent to your ſight;
Your ſmiling fortune or diſaſters ſhare,
Nor force compel me to forſake your care. 860

The rites perform'd Chriſt riſes from the feaſt,
And from the town retires with eager haſte:
With darkneſs ſhrouded, ſeeks the loneſome plain,
And climbs the Olive mountain with his train;
There bids them the nocturnal vigil keep; 865
But their eyes cloſe, beneath the weight of ſleep;
They ſtrew their limbs along the rocky way,
Spent with the labours of the buſy day.

But lulling reſt the mournful Hero flies,
Who ſeeming thoughtleſs of his natal ſkies,
To fancy gives his ſorrowing mind to gloom
With the ſad picture of his future doom.
His nature ſhudders at the ghaſtly view,
Which, as a man, he from his mother drew,
For tho' the ills that ſhake the human heart,
He feels terrifick in his mortal part,
Still his ſoul ſtands ſuperior to the woes,
And with unconquer'd zeal his virtue glows,
And now before his Sire he proſtrate falls,
And on him oft, with hands erect thus calls.
Muſt I, O Father, undergo this fate,
And others' faults ſeverely expiate?
Snatch me from death; ſoften your hard decree,
And ſhift this ſtore of ſorrow far from me!
Yet if your mind to no new change will yield;
And to ſubdue your wrath, your SON muſt bleed;
I ſtand a victim for the public good,
That man may draw luſtration from my blood.
He ſaid: to more complaints ſuppreſs'd the way,
And to reflection gave his heart a prey:
And lo! his frame is purpled with his gore,
The bloody ſweat freſh bubbling from each pore.
Struck with the ſight, a feather'd Angel flies,
Charg'd with a ſtore of comforts, from the ſkies,
To ſoothe his cares, his ſpirits to renew,
And from his body wipe the bloody dew.

Mean time the chief of traytors, Judas goes,
And from the mountain calls the lurking foes;
Who ready at their Leader's ſignal riſe,
To ſeize at once, and lead in chains, their prize,
Their arms ſhed wide the panting lunar beam,
Shrill ſound their ſhields, and harſh their weapons ſcream;
They cleave the wood, and taper to a point,
And with an unctuous juice the ſticks anoint:
They move in long proceſſion with the light,
The greaſy flames wide ſtreaming on the night.
The din of weapons and the ruffian cries
Shake the firm mountain and bid echo riſe.
The Lord advancing pour'd theſe accents bold,
Stop here your march: me, whom you ſeek, behold.
But why theſe arms, theſe burning torches, why;
In the full town, amid your Peers, have I
Announc'd my Supreme Father's great decree;
And none, though armleſs, preſum'd to harm me.
Why now do weapons glitter on the night?
But if my orient glory burns ſo bright,
That only death your envy can appeaſe;
Let flow my blameleſs blood, and envy ceaſe:
But ſure my friends may go, from vengeance free;
They only act, what I alone decree.
He ſpoke: and twice himſelf their prey confeſs'd;
And falling twice, ſtrange ſight! the ground they preſs'd:

Daſh'd to the ground, the maſſy armour rung,
And a denſe darkneſs on their eye-lids hung:
They riſe: but ſtare quite loſt in their deſign, 925
As one, who lay diſſolv'd in ſleep and wine.
But Judas ſoon, who ſpurn'd the balm of reſt,
By ſignals chas'd oblivion from their breaſt:
For veiling treaſon under friendſhip's ſmile,
He fawn'd and kiſs'd his Lord with graceful guile. 930
Tho' in the deed he knew himſelf betray'd,
Yet the Lord whiſp'ring to the traytor, ſaid:
Are kiſſes then the fruit of all my love,
And can rewards to ſuch a crime you move?
For other ends, than golden traſh to gain, 935
I have receiv'd you votariſt of my train.

Scarce had he ſpoke; when on him ruſh'd the band,
And rolling in denſe orbs around him ſtand.
As when ſome ſtately ſtag or foaming boar,
Fierce with fork'd tuſks, caught in a trammel roar; 940
A mob of ſhepherds gather round the ſnare,
And their ſharp ſpears againſt the ſavage rear.
So the fierce youths the captive Hero ſeize,
And burniſh'd arms around him armleſs blaze.
Some bind his hands; ſome wreath his neck with cord; 945
Some lead him this, and ſome another road.

Malchus a rage ſuperior yet can boaſt;
(Malchus, a bond-man from Idume's coaſt)
Who help'd no friend, no foe in war withſtood;
In limbs no ſtrength, no valour in his blood:
That Caiphas (for Malchus was his ſlave)
Might range him in the number of the brave,
Aſſur'd, no danger could from inſult flow,
He baſely treats the ſelf-devoted foe.
And tho' he bellows out with tongue ſevere,
Still ſafety, ſcarce, ſecures his heart from fear.
Fir'd with the outrage Peter could not bear;
But with his ſword cut off the coward's ear.
The God, regarding the inglorious wound,
Rais'd the diſſected member from the ground,
Applied with healing finger to its place,
And of the wound effac'd the niceſt trace:
With gentle touch he ſooth'd away the pain
And purg'd the ear from duſt and ſanguine ſtain,
Then reprimanding Peter, who had glow'd
To crop the growth of violence with his ſword,
Commands him ſtraight his hoſtile arms to hide,
And not in ſteel, which Heav'n forbids, confide.
Had not his ardor, timely been ſuppreſs'd,
He'd ſoon had lodg'd it in the boaſter's breaſt.
On other weapons, the Redeemer ſaid,
On other valour we relie for aid:
My Sire ſupreme (if he had deign'd to ſave,
Or ſnatch me from the diſappointed grave;
Or pardon man, by his own mercy won,
Without the blood-atonement of his Son.)

Could bid a thouſand guards around me flie,
And by their arms this band before me die.
Say, know you not the Militia and Pow'rs
The battles fought and fame of heav'n's bright tow'rs?
Now urge my Sire's commands, which heave theſe ſighs;
For mortal force and weapons I deſpiſe.

Tho' thus reprov'd, his paſſion ſcarce ſubſides:
So when a hunter thro' a city rides;
If in the ſtreets, chance offers to his hound
A ſtag bred docile to his owner's ſound;
With rapid jaws the hound the ſtag purſues,
And ſcarce the hunter's threat his rage ſubdues.
And now the Lord, ſelf-conquer'd and reſign'd,
O ſight indignant! all inſult unkind!
Tho' weak of frame, they chide him of delay;
And often falling, urge him on the way.
Thou, King of Hoſts, this treat behold, and riſe;
Is hell not blended with the falling ſkies?—
When ſhall your hand the rattling thunder roll?
Can nature now reſt cloudleſs in each pole?—
All fair proportion loſt, let ruin hurl'd,
Deſtroy the beauteous fabrick of this world.
Why ſleeps your hand? let heav'n diſſolve in gloom,
And hiſſing earth with three-fork'd thunder fume.
Tho' ſmitten with the love of human race;
Tho' glory burns in your heav'n's blue ſpace;

Where ſpirits, dreſt in plumage, form the choir,
And pour the ſong of rapture you inſpire;
Tho' here an age of gold ſhall ſoon ariſe,
Which on Religion's wings ſhall mount the ſkies;
With theſe lov'd objects be not ſtill ſo won,
As to behold your ſole begotten Son
With groupes of ills beſieg'd without redreſs,
Inſulted, poor, and ſinking with diſtreſs.
His friends all pallid to the woods are fled,
As at the ruſhing of a boar, half-dead;
Their flight obſerving ſwift purſue the foes
One, ſeized and lapſing, leaves behind his cloaths,
And up an arduous mountain panting glows.
Along deep thickets ſoft another ſteals,
And in a concave-rock himſelf conceals.
The devious grove glows fervent with their courſe,
And with their ſhouts the unſhorn hills turn hoarſe.

Arriv'd they enter at the high Prieſt's gates,
Where peers and citizens aſſume their ſeats.
All with ſtern looks the Captive-Hero eye,
And their fierce threats inform him, he ſhall die.
Then Caiphas, ſuperior to the reſt,
The full aſſembly with his thoughts addreſs'd,
Patriots! at length, ſucceſs has crown'd our cares,
A chain infrangible now the pris'ner wears.
But o'er in mind, what ſtill remains, let's run,
Wiſdom ought crown, what glowing zeal begun.
The day draws near, when glory's liquid rays
Shall on us ſhed a purple flood of blaze.

Awful attend, and ſolemnly prepare,
My ſentiments religiouſly to hear.
You know, our laws forbid, ſeverely great,
To breathe on man the dreadful words of fate: 1035
To Rome alone is giv'n that awful breath,
Which either pardons or pronounces death:
'Tis our's to trace a crime, that's big with fate,
And on the Roman with the proceſs wait:
'Tis his to hear, and nerve the dreadful blow, 1040
That numbers with the dead the friendleſs foe.

He ſpoke, and turning to the Captive, ſays,
I charge you by the God whom heav'n obeys,
To drop deceitful fiction from your heart,
And cloudleſs as the ſun, your thoughts impart: 1045
Leſt led by error, darkſome we decline
Your God-head to confeſs by rites divine.
Attend; and ſimply anſwer, are you he,
The omnipotent God's true Progeny;
A God yourſelf, whom ancient bards foretold, 1050
Should, gliding ſoft from heav'n, the world behold?
He finiſh'd, the Captive armleſs and weak,
With eyes half-lifted, thus began to ſpeak:

He, whom you ſay, am I; drop then the veil,
Which would the malice of your words conceal: 1055
I own my God-head; and without delay,
Heav'n to my reign ſhall ope a lucid way.

Soon, in the ſtarry dome, my Sire ſupreme
Shall twine around me with a Father's flame.
Me, viſiting the earth, you ſhall behold
Cloath'd with the drap'ry of a blazing cloud;
Celeſtials without number in my train,
Bruſhing with golden wings th'etherial plain.

He ſaid: when by the rites the High-Prieſt tore
The robe which flowing down his back he wore.
Glows not the proof with light, he thus exclaims,
Behold, his crime before us he proclaims?
Do not our laws condemn to bitter death
The man, who dares aſſert from God his birth?
Haſte, drag him to the Roman Conſul's gate;
Inſtant obey: and give him up to fate.

Peter, mean time, ſtruck with the penſive caſe,
At diſtance ſighing, eyes his Lord's diſgrace.
Approaching now the Temple's ſacred wall,
Where roſe in pride the Flamen's ſpacious hall:
Loneſome he ſat, beſide an open door,
With ſorrow heavy and in ſpirit poor.
A female ſlave, the Pontif's portreſs, eyes
Th'unhappy man, and inſtantly thus cries;
Say, ſhare you not the Captive's crimes and flight,
Why roam you elſe, when all repoſe, by night?

Peter unmann'd chills with a ghaſtly fear
At the ſlave's ſpeech, (to life ſuch love we bear!)
He ſtands confus'd, in ſtorms of horror toſt,
Or what to act, or how to flie quite loſt.
Compos'd in ſleep, ſo when a virgin-child,
Left by the mother in a deſert wild,
(The mother anxious homeward to repair,
With ſetting day, forgets her filial care)
Awakes, and caſting round her tearful eyes,
Nor mother dear, nor fond companion ſpies:
The way unknown, ſhe views the black'ning night,
The deſert drear, and dies away with fright.
So he confus'd and impotent with fear,
With abject mind, abjur'd a friend ſo dear,
For whom, while o'er him reaſon held her lore,
He would have ardent ſpilt his vital gore.
He ſeeks concealment in the hoſtile place,
And madly mixes with the ſervile race;
But ſoon ſuſpected of the Captive's train,
The more they urge, the more he ſtrives to feign.
Thrice they upbraid him with his Maſter's name;
And thrice his Maſter's country was their theme:
His mind thrice ſtartled at the riſing lye;
But thrice his words, at length, his friend deny.
Sudden the creſted bird with matin-hymns
The full departure of the midnight ſings,
Wont from his vocal breaſt to pour the ſhrills,
That bid Aurora mount the eaſtern hills:
The lays prophetick, which the Hero ſung,
Guſh'd on his ſpirits and intenſely ſtung.

Corroſive grief pervading faſt his frame,
And fell remorſe ringing his coward ſhame,
He ſteals unſeen and thro' the city ſtrays,
Pallid with vigils and the moon's cold rays.
With ſighs he views the baſeneſs of the ſin,
Tearing the ſilver honours of his chin.
'Tis ſung by fame, that at each night's return,
He uſed, thro' life, the perjur'd hour to mourn.
Aurora often liſten'd to his pains,
When ſhe diſclos'd to view th'ethereal plains:
And Veſper often ey'd his breaſt to heave,
With grief luxurious in a loneſome cave.
Of ſorrow fond, and to preclude relief,
He tells the ſtrains of his deſerted Chief:
And fancy always paints his daſtard-ſhame,
When a maid's tongue congeal'd with fear his frame.

As yet Aurora, with returning day,
Streak'd not with blaze Olympus' concave way;
When Chriſt was led, his hands with fetters bound,
To Pilate's palace 'mid a ruffian ſound.
Who, when thron'd high on his judicial ſeat,
The maze of crimes purſu'd and iſſu'd fate.
Pilate, whoſe veins ſtream'd rich with Roman gore,
Judea ſway'd beneath Tiberius' lore:
Whom thus the band addreſs'd with furious breath;
Behold a culprit, give him inſtant death.

Potent in fraud ſuſpend him high in air,
And the ſhame let him of the gibbet ſhare.
The waves of people overflow the gate 1140
And the hoarſe walls their ſanguine cries repeat.

Pontius the Captive youth with ardor ey'd,
(For ſcarce youth's bloſſom in his form had dy'd)
Inſatiate view'd his frame of graceful ſize,
T'unwonted beauties of his face and eyes. 1145
Then ſtood confirm'd, he had deriv'd his birth,
Either from Gods above, or Kings on earth.
And now his breaſt with ſoft indulgence flows,
And melts with pity at the Captive's woes;
Silent he ſtudies to avert his pains, 1150
And break aſunder his inglorious chains:
And thus accoſts him: ſay, unhappy, tell,
With what black crimes your ſad diſaſters ſwell?
Whence ſudden riſe theſe ſtorms that round you blow;
What ills thus plunge you in a ſea of woe? 1155
Whence is your birth, what blood contains your vein:
What ſceptre waits your hand, or realm your reign?

To his demand, Chriſt ſhortly thus replied;
Nor crime to this tribunal was my guide:
Nor, in dread ſhape, ariſes to my thought, 1160
The leaſt commiſſion of a venial fault:
Unleſs it is a fault, that I obey
My Sire, who o'er Olympus ſpreads his ſway:

Nor am I anxious for a mortal throne;
Tho' of a regal race, myſelf I own. 1165

He ceaſed: Pilate again begins to trace
The wond'rous beauties of his noble face:
His wretched caſe, with various ſpeech to try;
But, mers'd, in woe, the Lord deign'd no reply.
Pontius, at length, the rabble's rage to fall,
Confines him pris'ner, in his inmoſt hall. 1171

End of the Second Book.

ARGUMENT of the Third Book.

The rumour of Chriſt's impriſonment having reached the town of Nazareth, Joſeph, to know the truth, comes without delay to Jeruſalem where he accidentally meets John pale and penſive from the diſaſters of his Maſter. They both repair to Pilate, who deſires Joſeph to inform him of the parentage and birth of Chriſt the priſoner. Joſeph to be clear in his narrative gives a curſory account of the Hebrew nation down to the birth of the Virgin Mary. She arrived at the age of woman-hood, an Angel orders her parents to chooſe for her a ſpouſe among their own tribe; which being convened for that purpoſe, Joſeph is ſelected for her huſband, who, finding her pregnant, reſolves to divorce her, but is ſoon convinced of her fidelity by the appearance of an Angel, relating to him the manner of her conception, and the greatneſs of the fruit of her womb. Thus ſatisfied, he and his Virgin-bride pay a viſit of three months to her couſin Eliſabeth, wife to Zacharias the Prieſt, and mother of John the Baptiſt. Cæſar (Auguſtus) regiſtering his ſubjects, Mary repaired with her ſpouſe to Bethlehem to be enrolled, and is delivered of the child Jeſus in a ſtable. The Shepherds ſalute him with hymns, the Eaſtern Kings with gifts. Then he relates her purification with Simeon's prophecy concerning the child: their flight into Egypt, to ſhun the maſſacre of Herod; their return after Herod's death: and concludes with a deſcription of finding Chriſt in the Temple, diſputing with the Doctors, and of his changing water into wine.

THE

THE

CHRISTIAD.

BOOK III.

PLUM'D Fame, now thro' the vicine towns had ſtray'd,
And ſung the Hero, by his train betray'd.
But, as obſcure, the rumour ſtill appears,
Nor yet had eccho'd in his Mother's ears.
Yet her preſaging mind was rack'd with pain, 5
Chill'd always with the Prophet's awful ſtrain:
To free the faithful from their Captive-ſtate,
Her Son ſhould feel the agonies of fate.

But when Joſephus (to whoſe ſpouſal care,
The Mother was conſign'd, by heav'ns blue ſphere) 10
The tidings heard, he, from fair Naz'reth's vales,
To Solyma, with aged foot-ſteps, ſteals.
His entrance is ſaluted with dread cries,
Which wound, thro' night, the twilight of the ſkies:
Swarming along the walls the people low'r, 15
And thro' the town in dreadful tumults pour.

Lo! faithful to his Hero, John appears;
Pallid, and juſt elaps'd the Cohorts ſpears;
Mers'd in the dangers, which his Lord attend,
With pain diſcerns the preſence of his friend. 20

To whom the Sage: ſtop, whither do you haſte?
What colour paints the viſage of our ſtate?
Where can Jehovah-born without you be;
Or in the town, whence roars this mutiny?—
Alas! the pangs, which prophecies impart, 25
Wound not, in vain, the troubled Mother's heart.

The youth his pain with mute embraces tells,
With grief that trickles, and the ſigh that ſwells;
Then briefly thus: alas! our hope is dead,
And all our ſafety is for ever fled: 30
Our Chief, ſeiz'd baſely, in a priſon lies;
The Tribunes of the town againſt him riſe;
Fervent, conſpire to rivet faſt his chains,
And glow to quench their envy in his veins.
His very train, diſſolv'd with ghaſtly fear, 35
Forſake his perſon, and daſtard diſappear.—
But where's the Mother, ſay?—has ſable fame
Announc'd the tidings to the wretched Dame?
If ſhe was here, perhaps the parent-grief
Might Pontius melt, to give her ſon relief. 40
Suppliants for peace before him let us go,
And the dire envy of the people ſhew.

Thus having ſaid, join'd by his hoary friend,
They both to Pilate's palace penſive tend.

So a poor peaſant, when the hand of war
The country ſpoil'd, and drove his cattle far,
In queſt of them, a tedious journey goes,
His eldeſt ſon, companion of his woes;
Thro' various unknown fields, they bend their way,
To ſee, if herds like their's, by chance ſhould ſtray:
Stopping, they roll, in vain, their weepful eyes,
And fill the devious valleys with their cries.
And now arrived at Pontius Pilate's gate,
Of Monarchs once the venerable ſeat;
While Syria was with regal power bleſt,
But now by Syria's Roman-chief poſſeſt:
Confuſion glowing thro' all ranks they ſee;
Before the hall, the Rabbins diſagree:
The Prieſts, receding from the Rector's door,
Againſt him bellow, and their hatred pour.

Fluſh'd with the ſcene, they ſoftly ſoothe their care;
And hope her influence ſheds on their affair.
Then thus ſpeaks John; diſmiſs your fear, my friend;
Hope dawns; now, for thy Son, the Chief attend:
But veil the birth, which from the ſkies he draws;
And for your preſence, plead a Father's cauſe.

Admitted now, both on the Rector wait;
Who with his Council held in a high debate

About the Captive's cauſe; when, lo! he ſees
A hoary Sage bend low, and claſp his knees. 70

Thou beſt of Romans, thus Joſephus cries,
To tame proud Syria, ſtation'd by the ſkies.
To curb the nation's hate, your pow'r engage,
Which reaſon guides not, and whoſe ſtrength is rage.
His Sire am I, 'gainſt whom their Chiefs conſpire, [75
And on him ſhed, in fictious crimes, their ire:
Before you brought, as baſeſt of the baſe,
To feel a ſanguine undeſerv'd diſgrace.
But virtue only is his mighty ill,
And deeds, that bleſſings on the world diſtill: 80
The peals of praiſe their blaſting envy claim,
And all the honours paid his tow'ring fame.

Anguiſh, in copious ſtreams of tears, bedew'd
The hoary viſage, while the ſuppliant ſued.
Pontius, with ſoothing words, and placid brows, 85
Conſoles them both, and hears the old man's vows:
Gives him to reſt, on a ſoft couch reclin'd,
And thus relieves the tortures of his mind.
How welcome is your preſence at this hour!
You'll not, perhaps, lament its want of pow'r. 90
Say then, (who better than a Father can?)
A ſhort relation of the Captive-man.
Fear not your thoughts with liberty to ſpeak;
To guard you harmleſs, I my honour ſtake.

For I atteſt the ſtars of yon blue ſphere,
How much your Son employs my tender care:
What ſchemes I form'd to ſave him from his foes;
To calm this nation's rage, that madly glows.
Detail, (for oft his fame has reach'd my ears)
His race, his fortune, and the blood he ſhares:
His mother's progeny, and your own rehearſe;
For my mind colours him of no low race.
His mien how ſtately, and his frame how fine!
And from his viſage flows an air divine:
What awful beams of honour dart his eyes;
And when he moves, the Monarch ſeems to riſe.
Then in his breaſt I felt the Godhead ſwell;
For on his tongue, more charms than mortal dwell.
That's he's a God, his actions loudly ſay;
And nothing of an earthly birth betray.
Then ſatisfy; for he averts my pray'r,
And deigns no anſwer to my friendſhip's care.
His mind regardleſs of the air he draws;
And of the aid, I proffer to his cauſe.

The Sage, theſe accents utter'd, doubtful ſtands,
To ſpeak evaſive of the Chief's demands;
Or, void of fraud, ingenuouſly proclaim
The birth celeſtial, and the Father's name.
When John, advancing, in ſoft whiſpers ſaid;
Offspring of Kings, fam'd for the virgin's bed;
Whence this blank pauſe, or why this long delay?
The truth expand, and lay aſide diſmay:

Safety reigns here; with fortitude confide.
He ſaid, the Sage embolden'd thus reply'd.

Rector of Syria, I will now unveil
The myſtic annals of a mighty tale.
But to indulge your wiſh, I'll ſimply trace
Firſt the fam'd lineage of our Hebrew race.
Know then, tho' poverty my hands confine
To fabric-tools, I boaſt a regal line;
A line, illuſtrious in the roll of fame,
And to of Orbs advanc'd celeſtial flame.
Of many nations the primeval Sire,
(A theme, you heard, oft eccho'd in our choir)
Abraham, guardian of the Hebrew line,
Who firſt enacted laws and rites divine;
Engender'd Iſaac, who, to manhood bred,
Enhanc'd with Jacob his connubial bed.
Jacob with twice ſix Peers prolific ſhone,
Whom founders of our twice ſix Tribes we own:
Above his brothers, Judas held a place
For pious actions and a num'rous race,
Enjoy'd this realm, which to his portion came,
And ſtil'd the land Judea from his name.
But to deſcend into the mid of things,
Hence David ſprung, the ſire of Iſrael-kings.
From him, as from our origin, our line,
With blood ſublim'd thro' fourteen Monarchs ſhine.
But your young Pris'ner claims a nobler birth;
Tho' mortal-born, he treads this mortal-earth;
Olympus ſtill he calls his natal place,
And from the Parent-god, a birth may trace:

That God, his Father, whom the earth obey,
The purple ether, and the ſhrouded ſea.
A maid, unconſcious of a man's embrace,
Brought forth the child, beneath the ſolar ſpace:
Who, tho' a mother, (Bards once ſung the ſtrains)
The roſy graces of a maid retains.
For God deſcending fill'd her with his breath,
And the creative SPIRIT gave the birth.
Hence, tho' eſteem'd his Sire by vulgar fame,
I'm Guardian only of the holy Dame:
To ſoothe the pungent troubles of her breaſt,
And bear the labours, that might wound her reſt.
But in male-honour dubious to confide,
And fearful to defame her virgin-pride;
She deign'd to hear my Hymeneal vows,
And make, with rites, unworthy me her ſpouſe.

This maid, the faireſt of the Hebrew-fair,
(With my whole courſe of love to fill your ear)
Is call'd Maria, in Naz'reth was bred,
And the ſole fruitage of her parents bed.
To win her heart, a hundred ſuitors ſtrove;
But of fair chaſtity ſmitt'n with the love,
The joys of Hymen, ſhe, averſe, declin'd
And in the fane her virgin vows enſhrin'd.
Her mother, Anna, venerable dame,
Full of hereafter, and the Prophet's theme,
That from her virgin daughter ſoon ſhou'd ſpring,
Egregious for his deeds, a future King;
Who ſhou'd his ſway o'er many nations hold:
So Heav'n decreed, and ſo the Bards foretold.

Often a voice, deſcending from the ſkies,
(While ſleep its influence ſhow'r'd on her eyes)
Bad her the Nobles of her Tribe convene,
And for her daughter chuſe one of the train.
But tho' to woman-hood arrived the maid,
Still no regard was to the viſion paid.
At laſt, in the full azure of the day,
The voice was, to the parents, heard to ſay:
" To bind in Hymen's bands your daughter haſte;
" Nor for a diſtant Son, your moments waſte;"
But of your blood, by uſe, a ſpouſe provide;
Break off delays; and crown your maid a bride.

Thro' the ſmall town flies ſoon the ſwift report;
And ſoon conven'd, the kindred youth reſort.
The virgin's manſion ecchoes with the band,
Each fluſh'd with hope to gain the virgin's hand.
Ev'n I, led by proximity of blood,
Amid the crowd of rival ſuitors ſtood;
That I might hail the fortune of my friend,
Who ſhou'd the virgin's nuptial bed aſcend.
For, far from me, advanc'd in hoary age,
With ſprightly bands a rival to engage:
Who equal all in manly beauty ſhone,
And whoſe fair flow'r of youth was then new-blown.
Tho' all gaz'd, trembling, the deciſive ſkies,
Each boſom heav'd to claſp the virgin-prize.
While flutter'd hope, and events roll'd in clouds,
We ruſh'd into Joachim's hall in crowds,

Where roſe an altar, awful for its age,
And where he us'd the Godhead to aſſuage:
Built by our race, and ſacred by their fears,
Was held in rev'rence for three hundred years:
Before this altar proſtrate we implor'd
The hoſt Angelick and the Angel's Lord;
Placid to mark, by ſome ſure ſignal giv'n,
The huſband he deſign'd, from his high heav'n.
In the mid ſtood tearful the beauteous fair,
With eyes dejected and diſorder'd hair:
A bluſh ſuffus'd her face with crimſon glows,
Like the pale lilly blended with the roſe.
As when the new-born moon deſcending, laves
Her virgin-viſage in broad ocean's waves:
With guardian ſtars aſcending, bright adorns
Olympus' azure, with her ſlender horns.
So ſtood the Virgin 'mid the circling train,
Her God invoking in a plaintive ſtrain,
And much atteſting God's wing'd-tow'ring choir,
She yielded— how adverſe to her deſire!
Her Sire kiſs'd off her fear, and dried her eyes,
And taught her ſoon the mandate of the ſkies.
Her mother, Anna, rev'rend for her age,
Full of the God, heav'd with an holy rage,
Rav'd through the palace, wond'rous to be ſeen,
And her ſhrill ſhouts roll'd through the ſtarry plain;
Approaching me, unworthy of ſuch grace,
She fix'd her eyes, and liv'd upon my face.
Seizing my hand, for you alone, ſhe cries,
The Maid is deſtin'd by the ſtarry ſkies.

All ſtood amaz'd, yet none among the band,
Envy'd my honour of the Virgin's hand.
But I, ſtill conſcious of my hoary head,
My preſence wail'd, and ſhun'd the nuptial bed.
The faithful youths againſt my coyneſs riſe, 245
And preſs me to receive the offer'd prize.
I yield perſuaded, and lamenting lead,
To rites connubial, the lamenting Maid.

Now, night her hoſt of ſtars on ether brings,
The world ſuffuſing with her ſable wings: 250
We, ſecret, enter both the nuptial door;
Sad wept the bride, and lav'd with tears the floor.
So in the ſpring when mounts the plantal juice,
And in the trees its fecund ſoul infuſe:
The ſlender vine's luxurious branches feel 255
The pruning virtue of the peaſant's ſteel;
Should 'gainſt the root, the hook imprudent ſound,
The mother-vine ſtreams blameleſs by the wound.
Tho' willing not to crop the Virgin's pride,
To ſoothe her grief with ſofteſt words I tried. 260
When drawing from her breath the long-breath'd ſighs,
In accents ſweetly-plaintive, thus ſhe cries:
Within me dwells ſome virtue of the ſkies,
And pure Religion prompts me to deſpiſe
The nuptial-bed, and chaſtity purſue, 265
With love perpetual, to her merit due.
For, tho' the Prophets my reſolves oppoſe;
With other mandates, tho' my Mother glows;

Still I poſſeſs an order, which defeats
My Mother's raptures, and the Prophet's threats.
Wherefore ſhall Jordan ſooner ſeek his ſource,
And the wild ſtars deſiſt their vagrant courſe,
Than I ſhall light the nuptial torch, to fume
My virgin-mind, ſtain'd with its groſſer gloom.
She ſaid : her ſorrow, ſwelling into tears,
In large round drops her gen'rous cheeks beſmears :
A creeping horror ſudden ſeiz'd my frame ;
Trembled my knees, night veil'd my viſual beam ;
Thrice I attempted to announce my pain,
And thrice my tongue eſſay'd the taſk in vain.
And lo ! a voice, deſcending from the ſkies,
In awful and majeſtick accents cries :
" The joys connubial to indulge forbear,
" But guard your ſpouſal vows with holy care."
I roſe and wildly gazing on my bride,
At length, with painful pauſes, thus replied.
Say, Virgin. candid ſay, 'gainſt Heav'n's command,
Why have I ſtretch'd to you a bridegroom's hand ?
Who has (the nuptial joys I never ſought)
On my pure conduct ſuch diſaſters brought ?
A better fate breath'd in my Father's ſtrain,
At once a bard, and flamen of the Fane :
" Or you, he ſung, no Hymeneals wait ;
" Or honour ſhall attend your bridal ſtate."
Now ſince the ſkies have tied our ſpouſal band,
But with dread ſigns the ſpouſal joys withſtand ;

To my reſolve a due attention give,
As now, with Virgin honour always live :
Nor ſhall I dare the ſacred union break,
Nor with volatile ſteps your dome forſake :
But gaze upon you, with a parent's eye ;
And you, with filial love, on me rely.
'Tis my department, now, to bear your cares ;
So wills your ardor, and my riper years.
Pleas'd with the plan, the wedded Virgin roſe,
And in a loneſome chamber ſought repoſe.
Untold, I'll paſs my ſufferings thro' that night ;
The ſleepleſs horror, and my imag'd fright.

Now darkneſs fled before the bluſh of day,
And Sol extinguiſh'd ſhadows in his ray.
My couch I leave, with ſofteſt ſilence tread,
And viſit, ſmoothly ſlow, the virgin-bed.
Scarce had the portal on the hinges roll'd,
When on my eyes flaſh'd lights of beamy gold ;
Which veſt the walls, and to the roof aſpire,
And radiant ſeem to ſet the room on fire.
Entranc'd and luſtred with a melting beam,
On the ſoft bed reclin'd the Virgin-Dame.
Nor deign'd to anſwer my repeated prayers,
Nor ſeem'd diſtreſt or melted with my cares ;
But like Aurora, bluſhing in the eaſt,
With hands and eyes erect, ſhe Heav'n addreſs'd.
What better change improv'd her beauteous form !
Her eyes how bright ! with grace her looks how warm !

The artiſt thus to grace ſome temple's ſhrine,
And call forth rev'rence to his fine deſign;
A maple falls, of it a ſtatue forms,
And bids it breathe with all the chiſſel's charms:
With graces ſtor'd and poliſh'd to behold,
It's beauties he ſublimes with blazing gold.
Guſhing with floods of radiance, ſo a cloud
Around the raptur'd Maid a luſtre roll'd.
A crown of ſtars ſeem'd on her head to beam,
And veſt her temples with a lambent flame.
With pureſt light replete, a ſilver moon
Beneath the Virgin's feet ſerenely ſhone.
Such wond'rous ſcenes my mind with horror fill'd,
And while I ſpoke, my breaſt with fear was chill'd.
O, from this maze of wonders, ſet me free,
Almighty Sire! they own your Deity:
Your hand in all theſe prodigies I find;
Then placid breathe your Spirit on my mind,
That I, no longer in ſuſpence, may ſee,
How to purſue, and act your juſt decree.

I ceaſed to pray: at length the beauteous Dame
Woke from her trance, as from a broken dream.
Her ſighs heave ſadly, and her eyes beſmear
Her ſnow-like boſom with a burſting tear.
Aw'd I approach, and bending low, demand,
By the new union of our bridal band;
And by that Veſtal love, whoſe flames refine,
And all her zeal to chaſtity confine;

Fearleſs to ope the ſcene of this affair,
And make me ſocial in her anxious care.

Bright, as the roſe, ſurcharg'd with matin dew, 355
Her eyes, about the floor, a luſtre threw;
Then ſtarting from her pauſe, ſhe thus reply'd:
My joy, from thee, no longer ſhall I hide:
Attend— but where ſhall I commence the tale,
Or who'll believe the wonders I'll reveal? 360
But I conjure you, by theſe gladſome tears
To guard in ſilence, what ſhall reach your ears;
Nor let it roll abroad, a vulgar theme,
'Till Heav'n conſigns it to the trump of Fame.
What time, Aurora man to labour wakes, 365
And new-born day the earth with luſtre ſtreaks;
The ſtrange events, in Prophets' ſongs foretold,
Pour'd on my mind, and o'er my ſenſes roll'd:
But chief the ſong, it's conſtant influence ſhed,
(And to my mind the God, the picture led)] 370
Which hymn'd the Virgin, of a regal race,
Who ſhould bring forth, without a man's embrace
(Strange to relate) the Rector of the ſkies,
Whoſe birth ſhould on a golden world ariſe.
I thought her bleſs'd, on whom, the Supreme Pow'r 375
Should, ſmiling, ſuch illuſtrious honour ſhow'r,
And tacit in my mind, began to hymn
The future Mother of our heav'nly King;

Prepar'd with gifts the Infant-god to praiſe,
If in our city born, or in our days.
Dark in events, whilſt I revolv'd this theme;
Before my eyes expands a ſheet of flame;
Soft gales of air in cloudleſs brightneſs glide,
And (wond'rous to relate) the ſkies divide:
Whence Heav'n's bleſt hoſt, incumbent on the wing,
The poles mount joyful and applaud their King.
Thro' portals barr'd and walls with marble lin'd,
The ſtars effulg'd, and all Olympus ſhin'd.
When lo! a Boy, deſcends at God's command,
Heav'n in his ſmiles, a lilly in his hand;
Sparkling the chamber with his roſy wings,
To me this ſalutation raptur'd ſings.
O, Thou more happy, than the happieſt fair;
Than other mothers, Heav'n's more pleaſing care!
Olympus' King, to dwell with you, prepares,
Collects his God-head, and forſakes the ſpheres.

These words ſcarce heard (the maid continu'd) ſhed,
On my admiring frame, a chilling dread:
But, he to ſoothe me with a pledge divine,
Inſtant replied, O maid, your fear reſign;
By you the God, above your ſex, more won,
Is pleas'd to make you mother of his Son:
A Son, you then ſhall bear, who fam'd ſhall be,
And ages own him God's own progeny.
Him born a Saviour to the faithful train,
You ſhall call Jeſus, in your native ſtrain;

A name, already hell begins to fear,
And from its center draws an iron tear.
His ſoaring fame, and wond'rous acts, ſhall riſe
Above the natives of this earth and ſkies. 410
The ſkies ordain, he ſhall the pow'r embrace,
And mount the throne of his illuſtrious race.
Nor time nor limits ſhall confine his reign,
And everlaſting ſhall his ſway remain.

He ſaid: my fear receding by degrees, 415
I ſpoke: my reaſon ſtarts at your decrees:
For, I, reſolv'd, the virgin-bluſh to guard,
Have, always, free from man, my heart preſerv'd.

Finiſh'd my ſpeech, the Angel his reſum'd:
With great Jehovah's breath divine perfum'd, 420
Without man's commerce pregnant you ſhall be,
And in due time bring forth your progeny:
A God all nations ſhall your offspring call,
And Son to him, who rules this world's great ball.
Of this ſtrange truth, to make all doubt ſubſide, 425
Eliza, know, to you by blood allied,
Who ſterile pin'd, when purpl'd with youth's glow,
Now ag'd deſpairs to feel a mother's throe:
Yet the ſixth moon with luſtre circles earth,
Since ſhe ſwell'd pregnant with a future birth. 430
So great's his pow'r, on whoſe commands I flie,
The King and author of the ſtarry ſky.

This having ſaid, he wings the ether blue;
Whom thus with eyes and language I purſue:
Say, winged beauty of the azure plains, 435
I gladly yield to what your King ordains.
Flying to earth, mean time, a crimſon cloud
Involves my body in a ſheet of gold
Fretted with ſtars of varied luſtre, glows
The ample concave, and with rays o'erflows. 440
Fair Iris emulates ſuch chequer'd dyes,
(Her pictur'd veſt winding oblong the ſkies)
When adverſe Sol his melting radiance pours,
Full on her bow diſtent with rainy ſhow'rs.
Soon as the Sire ſupreme breath'd on this cloud 445
From the bright ſtars burſts forth a ſpirit loud:
Its ſpreading progreſs darts a length of ray,
And golden flaſhes vibrate on the day.
Wrapt in the whirl-wind, all my limbs inhale
The potent virtue of the ſacred GALE: 450
Th' ethereal vigour, thrilling thro' my frame,
Diſſolves my heart, with an impaſſion'd flame.
By nature's inſtinct ſo the fecund earth
Conceives, and pours to day her various birth,
When Ether to her parent-lap repairs, 455
And Zephyr fans her with his genial airs.
This ſcene concluded, bright Olympus' throng
Clap their glad wings, and burſt in varied ſong:
Hoarſe thunders o'er blue ether's ſummit roll,
And op'ning ſkies flaſh fire from pole to pole. 460

While thus the maid the wond'rous tale purſu'd,
The ſmiling tears her roſeat cheeks bedew'd.

Of little faith, yet full of pray'r I ſtand,
The ſtars addreſſing with a ſupine hand:
(For ſo incred'lous was my ſtupid mind)
Such prodigies to credit I declin'd;
Perſuaded well, that youths, with ſtudious care,
Weave the fine fraud, frail virgins to enſnare:
That maids of eaſy faith, ah, too ſoon won!
Imbibe man's pois'nous words and are undone.
And now I meditate, oh direful ſhame!
My virgin-wife for ever to diſclaim;
When on my ſleep an angel-form aroſe,
The ſame in looks, the ſame his ſky-ſpun cloths,
Which to my bride his ſtarry viſit paid,
And bore the meſſage, which I now diſplay'd.
Naked his roſy ſhoulders ſtand confeſt;
Save from the left depends a golden veſt,
Which three-folds claſps compos'd of fuſile gold
The floating plaits about his loins infold.
His girdle bluſhing with a purple dye
Thick ſetts of golden ſtuds around him tye.
His waiſt's fine down, which ſcarce the eye-ball ſees,
Steals, mounting, on the ſight by ſlow degrees,
Scaling his ſhoulders, more luxurious ſprings,
Then ſtarts at once into a ſhade of wings.
A diamond-chaplet round his calves he wears;
Thence, to the knees undreſt, the Form appears:
His beauteous looks, his mien's ſweet-breathing grace
Proclaim the boy of no terreſtrial race;
But ſome fair offspring of Olympus high;
Nurs'd in the region of the ſtarry ſky.

Nor was his tunic of leſs wond'rous art;
With jewels ſpotted, ſhines the upper part;
The low'r borders meander'd twice with gold, 495
Within their orbs, a texture tale infold;
Three pictur'd boys walk, harmleſs, thro' a blaze,
And hymn, with looks erect, Jehovah's praiſe.
Circling the furnace roof, fierce glows the fire,
And head-long, from the youths, the flames retire. [500
While I in ſilence gaz'd, Heav'n's beauteous gueſt,
To me, with fear congeal'd, theſe words addreſs'd.
Offspring of Kings, what crime o'ercaſts your ſoul;
Can you, theſe ſigns, that ſpeak the God, controul?
Suſpect no fraud to drop from her pure tongue; [505
Truth tunes the ſtrain, the ſacred virgin ſung:
She has conceiv'd, ſtranger to human aid;
By God's eternal Spirit pregnant made.
When God breath'd on her from his lucid dome;
The Godhead fled from Ether to her womb. 510
Boldly aſſent: For on our azure plains,
Pleas'd with our homage, truth eternal reigns.
Your Prophets, once, theſe miracles foretold,
Their lays obſcurely veſted with a cloud:
This maid is figur'd by the cryſtal gate, 515
That binds eternal, Ether's deep retreat;
When human traces never print the road,
Frequented ſolely by the ſupreme God,
Whoſe ingreſs and regreſs ne'er violate,
With motion's noiſe, the portal's dormant ſtate. 520

To you this maid he yields, who rules the ſky,
But bound by Hymen, Hymen's freedom flie:
Let her thro' life, your ſage protection ſhare,
Tho' ſafe beneath God's tutelary care.

He ſaid, and winging ether, fades away,
But glancing thro' the cloud ſtrews realms of day.
A ſudden love my breaſts pervading, fills
With ſoothing rapture, and exſtatic thrills.
As iron drops its rigour in the fire,
So melts my ſtubborn ſoul with love's deſire:
Owning my mad'ning folly, I ariſe,
And call down meek-ey'd Mercy from the ſkies.
Now reaſon to my mind reſtoring light,
The Supreme's deep decrees expand more bright,
Which he infus'd into the Prophets' breaſt,
The truth in ſhades of ancient phraſes dreſt.
This virgin is the buſh, which he, (whoſe head
Sharp-pointed rays of ſtreaming glory ſhed)
Beheld, aſtoniſh'd, on the mountain's brow,
Burning with crackling flames at diſtance glow.
Thro' harmleſs fires twinkl'd the untouch'd leaves
For ever verdant 'mid the lambent blaze.
She is the fleece, (unleſs the Bards are vain)
Which kept its dryneſs 'mid a flood of rain:
Impervious to the ſhow'rs, on whoſe broad tide,
Earth's humid ſurface, lucent ſeem'd to glide.
Before ſuch thoughts my night of error flies,
Our ſcene moves faith to own ſuch prodigies.

Spread thro' the towns of Galilee, now Fame,
Sings, wond'rous to tell, a venerable Dame,
Who lives as recluſe, on a mountain's height,
And hoary bends, beneath old age's weight,
How with firſt offspring pregnant ſwells her womb,
Defam'd as ſterile, in her youthful bloom.
The winged Nuncio of the tow'ring ſkies
Foretold this event, thus the virgin cries;
Eliza is her name, the ſame our line,
And on her pregnancy, twice three moons ſhine.
Pleas'd with the thought, we riſe without delay,
And to our Kindred-dame direct our way:
Thro' arduous mountains, and fatiguing pain,
The Flamen Zachariah's houſe we gain.
Scarce we, arriv'd, had touch'd the manſion-gate,
When nodding comes the Dame, ſtrange to relate,
With fond embrace hangs on her welcome gueſt,
And in the act, God ruſhes to her breaſt:
A ſudden heat ſuffuſes thro' her frame,
And this the language of the hoary Dame.

Above all other Parents, Parent bleſt!
Bleſt is the burden of your ut'rine Gueſt!
Whence theſe unwonted heav'nly graces ſhow'r,
Why on my ſilver head ſo ſmiles this hour,
Which gives me to behold with ardent eyes,
And ſpeak to her, ſelected by the ſkies,
'Mid many, parent of the ſupreme Lord,
Gracing my manſion, of her own accord?

At your approach, with rapture throb'd my breaſt,
And my womb's Babe his joy with bounds expreſs'd.
Hail, ſacred Mother, to the ſkies moſt dear;
For faith conſpicuous and to truth ſincere;
Who with glad faith held what the Angel ſaid,
Unconſcious of ~~your~~ being the Mother-maid.
Hear, Ether's Queen, and touch'd with human cares,
Smoothe life's misfortunes by your potent pray'rs.

She ſaid: with bluſhes, as the roſe, replete,
And mildly humble in an high eſtate,
The holy Maid, bedew'd with crimſon rays,
Rais'd to the ſtarry King her ſong of praiſe;
Who eyed her, gracious, from Olympus' throne,
Poor, loneſome, humble, and to praiſe unknown.
Then of hereafter full, ſhe ſung the Fame,
So often preſag'd, that ſhould crown her name.

To you, too tedious, would appear the tale,
Should I the portents and the ſigns reveal,
That on the trembling world diſtill'd a fear,
Soon as the mighty Infant breath'd this air:
The Caſpian kingdom heard the bards with dread,
And Nile's rich waves roll'd to their ſecret head.
Egypt receiv'd the oracle with frowns,
And eaſtern realms were ſhock'd thro' all their towns.

If fame is true, your own Auſonian plains
Reſounded horrid with the Prophets' ſtrains:
That ſoon a King ſhould drink the blaze of day,
And o'er the ſubject world extend his ſway,
Strong in his own, and Father's virtue riſe, 605
And all his people tranſlate to the ſkies.

Firm'd by theſe ſigns, ſpontaneous I obey
My pregnant Spouſe, and God-like rev'rence pay.
When the plum'd youth (the ſame I often ey'd
Viſit, by day, the chamber of my Bride) 610
Her pregnant ſerv'd, deſcending ether's pole,
Charg'd with rich food and nectar's ſacred bowl.
Oft have I panted for the natal day,
But oft my hope was daſh'd with dull delay:
Theſe wiſhes I revolv'd within my breaſt. 615
O may the Babe celeſtial ſtand confeſs'd
Before my death; ſince evident appear
The portents which befel the beauteous fair.

Crop then without delay your purple flow'rs,
Your lucent lillies ſhed in copious ſhow'rs, 620
To God new-born your balmy preſents bring,
And awfully approach your Infant-king,
And could I wiſh to my old age more days,
It would be, Infant, on your deeds to gaze;
Then fear expell'd, peace on the world ſhall riſe, 625
And you, a God, reign in your native ſkies.
Truth, join'd with piety, this earth ſhall tread,
And nodding now, Religion raiſe her head.

Juſtice the ſcenes of life at large will range,
And earth ſurpriz'd admire its better change;
Into the ſcythe the ſavage ſword be roll'd,
And nature brighten with an age of gold;
To ſoothe delay, my fancy pour'd ſuch hues,
And hope was nouriſh'd with ſuch diſtant views.

Cæſar (Auguſtus ſtiled) who that time reign'd,
To regiſter his ſubject world ordain'd.
My ſteps to Bethlehem's ancient walls inſiſt,
To have our names rang'd in the civil liſt.
The Virgin following leaves her manſion-ſeat,
The town of Naz'reth gave the ſafe retreat.
To Bethlehem come, with houſes thinly ſpread,
What time the ſkies, wrap'd in night's ſhadow, fled:
A loneſome houſe the city's walls ſucceeds,
The roof imbrown'd with turf and marſhy reeds:
Apt for the peaſant, whom nocturnal gloom
In town detains far from his ruſtic home.
We ſeek this cot to weary travellers free,
Led on by chance, or rather God's decree,
Who not content his only Son ſhould groan,
And feel thro' life misfortunes not his own,
But in a ſtable will'd, he ſhould be born,
With want diſtreſs'd and of relief forlorn.
The aſs I feed, whoſe help made ſhort our road,
And whoſe fatigue made light our houſhold load.

Next whom, her ſtraw-ſtrew'd bed the Virgin preſs'd,
The houſe too throng'd, to number her a gueſt.
An ox ſheds, on her left, his tepid breath,
Whom a poor plowman work'd to till his earth,
Cutting with crooked plough the ſide-laid clay,
Nor ceas'd the toil, till ceaſed the live-long day.
He cultures with ſuch pains his rented field,
Himſelf from famine and his babes to ſhield.

Now midnight from her ſummit had declined,
When ſleep (on a bare ſtone my head reclin'd)
Receding ſoftly from my waking frame,
Op'd on the ambient gloom my viſual beam,
A flood of radiance thro' the ſtable flows,
And the brown ſtraw with golden tincture glows.
I riſe; and lo! an Infant naked lies,
Bedew'd with rays, and ether's richeſt dyes;
Whom on her poor ſtraw-couch the mother maid
Brought forth, exempt from anguiſh and of aid.
The Aſs and Ox on either ſide admire,
Forget their food, and with their heads aſpire.
The Mother ſelf with brightneſs glad appears,
Her knees bend low, her eyes diſſolve in tears;
With hands directed to the ſuffus'd ſkies,
Her new-born babe of drap'ry bare ſhe eyes,
Like to the ſtars appears the Virgin's form,
Their luſtre pallid with a guſhing ſtorm,
When the dark ether roaring Boreas ſhrouds,
Expanding wide the rain-diſtended clouds.

Sheep's-ſkins I ſtrew for cloths of purple dye,
And forks invers'd a cradle's place ſupply;
More uſeful things and want the night withold, 685
The birth demanding ſcenes ſuperb with gold.

Nor yet night's gloom had chas'd the blazing day,
When thronging ſhepherds urge their rapid way;
The door with flow'rs and varied chaplet glows,
And the wild pipe with ruſtic numbers flows. 690
With down-caſt eyes they ſeek the ſacred ſtall,
And prone to earth before the Godhead fall.
Struck with amaze I queſtion'd how cou'd fame,
Along the fields, the birth ſo ſoon proclaim.
When one thus quickly anſwers my demand; 695
Shepherds are we, and graze the woody land;
Our uſual vigils we nocturnal keep,
To guard from beaſts of prey our folded ſheep.
What time the world was wrap'd in mid-night ſhade,
Around our heads a guſhing luſtre play'd, 700
And as we tott'ring ſtood unnerv'd with fear
This voice was wafted from the void of air:
Mortals, fear not, glad tidings I diſplay,
In your confines a God is born this day,
Who ſhall reſtore (as prophecies relate) 705
Mankind from darkneſs to his priſtine ſtate.
In yonder town, you may behold him laid
His place a ſtable, and of ſtraw his bed.
The voice our guide, our eyes we throw around,
And view the town ſlow riſing from the ground, 710

An heav'nly band, with wings of various dyes,
On clouds incumbent float along the ſkies ;
And when they rang'd the ſkies in thrice three throngs,
And thrice they harped ſweet their feſtive ſongs,
In a full chorus, ſwift the poles they wing,
And ether's plains with their applauſes ring.
This ſaid : amaz'd, they gaze the Infant's face,
And his bright charms with eyes and ſouls embrace.
Such floods of beams guſh from the Infant's frame,
That overflow the ſtable with a flame.
So when the roſe unfolds her crimſon leaves,
The ſun burns brighter with her new-born blaze
Or when the vernal day burſts from the eaſt,
Of melting light it ſheds a roſeat waſte.

Tho' we the Godhead in the Babe confeſs'd
And without food and aid a God is bleſt ;
Yet, as an offspring of a mortal Dame,
He breath'd the mortal in a mortal frame ;
Inhal'd the moiſture of his mother's breaſt,
And ſhe his Infant-limbs with drap'ry dreſt :
More, to fulfil the rites our law preſcribes,
He bore the circumciſion of our tribes ;
We call him JESUS, mindful of the name,
An angel bore, wing'd by the Sire ſupreme.
To mark his prieſthood and his regal race,
The nations name him CHRIST in Grecian phraſe,
And tho' no male embrace his mother ſtain'd ;
Beneath her roof, ſhe forty ſuns remain'd.

The royal Maid to her luſtration haſtes,
And with her Infant tends to Salem's gates;
We bring a pair of turtles to be ſlain
(Our rites ſo order) in the ſacred Fane.
The prieſt by cuſtom at the altar waits,
His ſnowy robe deſcends in flowing plaits,
A mitre of two horns his temples ſhrouds
And the watch'd fire meanders high in clouds.
A crown of children round the altar ſtood,
And from a chalice pour'd the heifer's blood,
Which to the God ſupreme the Flamen ſlew,
To ſtop the vengeance to the people due.
With hands the ſages of the nation preſs'd
The heifer's front, with holy fillets dreſs'd.
Their fingers, bluſhing with the victim ſlain,
The prieſts the altar lightly thrice diſtain:
The altar's flames imbibe a deeper hue,
And ruddy drops the ſeven lamps bedew.
Sprinkled with blood flaſhes the ample veil,
Whoſe ambient folds myſterious rites conceal.
Finiſh'd the rites, the prieſt prepares to taſte,
Join'd with his ſons, the ſacrifical feaſt.
And now proceeds the Virgin humbly mild;
Her right hand holds the birds, the left her child:
Shall I rehearſe, what ſigns the heav'nly King
Struck out, that ſpoke the Child his true offspring?
How chill'd the prieſt, when he the Infant gaz'd,
And what new light about the altar blaz'd?

He aw'd thrice heap'd with frankincenſe the flames,
And thrice the fire above the veſſel ſtreams:
Yet ſtill according to his country's laws
From the ſlain birds the vital gore he draws,
Scatters the plumes and o'er the entrails ſtrays,
His face converted to the eaſtern blaze;
Then breaks the wings, and on the ſubject fire
The crackling entrails into fume expire:
From the burn'd victim grateful vapours riſe,
And Panchean odours ſcent the balmy ſkies.

Another ſcene inſpir'd the breaſt with fears;
And awe ſeiz'd Simeon bent with hoary years,
Than whom, no man among the city's crowd,
With fairer homage, to ſtrict juſtice bow'd:
Th'Almighty SPIRIT of the bending ſky
Into hereafter granted him to pry,
And ſaid, he ſhould not ceaſe to drink the day,
'Till he the promis'd Saviour ſhould ſurvey.
For worn with age, he would conſign to death,
Life's painful labours, and his panting breath;
But the fond hope, to view the ſource of life,
Gave him to live, and ſecond nature's ſtrife,
With holy inſtinct now diſtends his breaſt,
And feels, that God now dwells the temple's gueſt.

So, when his maſter's ſteps attends a hound,
His ſenſe of ſmelling o'er a length of ground.
A hare detects: with ears erect he ſtands,
And ſnuffs the gales that bruſh the ſcented lands.

Then ſtarting from the path, he devious ſtrays,
And traces with his eyes the hare's wild maze.
Along this path, and now o'er that he flies,
And the wide meadows vibrate with his cries.
So, in the fane, exults the rev'rend ſage,
And claſps the Infant, with an holy rage:
With liquid eyes, big with the pearly tears,
He in theſe words his joyful ſenſe declares.

Jehovah-born, almighty Infant, hail,
The ſplendid author of this world's great weal!
Thou com'ſt to waſh away the people's ſtains,
With the rich fluid of thy precious veins,
And to their manes ope a liquid way
To the bright realms of eternal day:
Welcome to earth; now to your words comply,
Father Supreme! 'tis granted me to die,
Now from this body's cloſe confinement free,
In peace diſmiſs me from life's miſery,
Since on me ſtreams the Gentiles' light divine,
And the new glory of the Hebrew-line!
Now to the Dame this fond addreſs he pays:
Who can thy mien aſſume or ſing thy praiſe?
To thee what thanks can pour the ſickly earth,
Who brought ſalvation by this happy birth?
Yet ſtill this fruitage of ethereal love
To many Hebrews ſhall deſtructive prove.
The time approaches, when your heart ſhall feel,
Oh ſad and joyleſs time! the dolorous ſteel:

When you, unhappy, ſhall be join'd to woe,
And Jordan's troubled wave retorted flow,
Then late and heavy ſhall ariſe the day, 825
And meaſure with ſick looks its pallid way:
The earth herſelf ſhall joy to leave her pole;
And thro' the void, her weight rejecting roll.
This ſaid, as mers'd in ſudden ſleep and tir'd,
He clos'd his eyes, and ſmiling ſoft expir'd. 830
All ſtare aghaſt; but from amazement free,
We ſtand ſerene vers'd in the ſkies decree:
Yet painful we revolve the ſage's word,
That to the mother points the naked ſword:
Anxious to know to whom the child ſhould be 835
The fatal origin of miſery.
But time too ſoon the dubious truth reveals
The preſent ſcene the menac'd woes details:
Unleſs for us ſome deeper wounds remain,
And ills are pointing with acuter pain. 840

About that time, three Kings forſook their ſtate,
And hither bent their ſteps from extreme eaſt.
And to the Infant ample preſents bore,
Myrrh, breathing frankincenſe, and golden ore:
The ſphere revolving thro' its ſtarry ſigns, 845
Proclaim'd a Monarch born in our confines;
Whoſe ſceptre ſhould the ſkies and earth obey,
And whom to ſee they march'd a tedious way.
A ſtar hung in the ſkies, a faithful guide,
Illum'd their paſſage with a blazing tide. 850

So, when our Sires abandon'd Egypt's toil,
And ſought, thro' dreary wilds, the promis'd ſoil;
A fiery globe preceded them by night,
And on them guſh'd a liquid waſte of light.
The town obtain'd, they bent, without delay,
To Tetrarch-Herod's gate their glowing way:
Their meſſage told, thinking, as he was King,
The royal Babe to be his own offspring.
Struck with amaze, with chilling fear unman'd,
Leſt this ſtrange royal heir ſhould ſeize the land,
Herod diſpatch'd a nuncio in haſte,
To bid the bards the royal preſence wait;
Of the new-born Infant the time, the place,
He curious aſk'd, his country, and his race.
Beth'lem, they cried, the birth by fame ſhould boaſt,
Whoſe crown and deeds ſhould ſway the ſtarry hoſt.
Now more confounded in the maze of cares,
He ſtrove to ſmoothe his brows and veil his fears;
And to diſmiſs the eaſtern Kings with grace,
He thus reply'd with well diſſembled face.

Monarchs, the cauſe which hither urg'd your way
Has always on us ſtream'd hope's ſmiling ray.
No dearer object than this child can riſe,
Whom prophets promis'd, inſpir'd by the ſkies.
The city Beth'lem borders on this place,
Of ſtructure old, and peopled by our race.
Thither, to ſeek the royal Babe, contend,
And when confeſs'd, to us a nuncio ſend,

That to the Child our homage we may pay,
And in our gifts our regal ſenſe diſplay;
Such joyful words dropt from the Tyrants tongue,
While round his heart a dreary envy clung:
Mad, that Heav'n's Monarch, whom the ſtars obey,
Sould dwell on earth and bear a regal ſway.

The ſtar beheld, the Eaſterns ſeek the town,
Of Iſraelites environ'd with a crown.
Now on the roof the ſtar's long travels ceaſe,
And all the cot ſtreams dimpling with a blaze.
So, when the death of kings, or wars dread rage,
Fierce comets from the wrathful ſkies preſage;
Behind them, flows a length of livid beams,
Which on the frighted globe with horror gleams.
Of pomp exempt, and ſtor'd with want's parade,
Into the low-roof'd cot the Monarchs lead,
Who rob'd in textur'd gold and crimſon veſt,
Proſtrate on earth the Infant-God confeſs'd.
While next the Dame thus bow'd the royal band,
Each pour'd his treaſures with a lib'ral hand.
Before the door, in long proceſſion, wait
A courtier train, who ſwell the pomp of ſtate:
While ſteeds with coverings glowing to behold,
Paw the rent earth, and champ the poliſh'd gold.

Their homage paid, exulting they purſue
The ſtar, its progreſs ſtain'd with blazing hue.

Adviſ'd to flie the regal city's gate,
Far on the right they roam from Herod's ſeat;
Who, furious with the fraud, an army calls,
And ſecret ſends to Bethlem's hated walls,
To ſeize by night when all creation reſts,
And ſlay the babes that ſuck their mothers breaſts;
That in the infant-crowd the royal heir
Might fall a victim, and the carnage ſhare.
But o'er my ſleep, hover'd a voice by night,
To ſhun the bloody ſcene and haſte my flight.
The Dame and child convey, (the voice exclaims)
And ſeek the Nile which parts in fourteen ſtreams;
There dwell, (nor is that land remote from thee)
Nor thence remove, until recall'd by me:
For Tetrach-Herod with ambition wild,
Now meditates the ſlaughter of the child.
I riſe, and to the Dame the ſpeech reveal:
Her limbs grow languid, and her viſage pale;
Runs here and there while haſte retards her flight
And ſcarce can truſt the ſhadow of the night.
There ſhe, unhappy, felt the ſword of woe
And all the pain that can from torments flow.

We go and ſoon depart the trait'rous town,
And plunge in devious paths with horror brown.
Thro' palmy woods and old Eluſa tend,
And high Idume's panting brow aſcend.

Mapſa receives us famous for her oil
Which parts the Aſian from the Libyan ſoil;
We enter now great Pharaoh's large domain,
On whoſe ſpread fields deſcends no foſt'ring rain;
Whoſe natives found the ether's vivid force, 935
The ſtars, the lunar orb, and ſolar courſe.
Along ſtrange floods we glide, ſtrange mountains ſcale,
And near to towns with turrets pointed ſail.
Anthedon's banks we trace, whoſe gentle waves
Smoothly reflect Papyrus' ſhrubby leaves. 940
We ſtart with horror at each whiſp'ring air,
Fearful and anxious for our infant-care.
The groves bend to the child their boughs of bays,
And zephyrs ſigh with balmy breath his praiſe;
The rocks and mountains, to expreſs their love, 945
Their craggy brows with feſtive lightneſs move.
A vocal ſignal of their joy to raiſe,
The floods fatigue their ſtreams in varied maze;
With gentle lapſe they tinkle down their bed,
Now over rocks their roaring water ſpread. 950
To caſt a deeper azure on the ſtream
The rocks with moſſy veſture verdant gleam.
Chiefly the birds, who dwell the banks along,
Inrich the ambient gales with liquid ſong:
Of ſuch ſoft notes pleas'd with the theme and cauſe, [955
With ſounding wings they lengthen their applauſe;
Rejoicing at her God's approach, the earth
Expands her lap, and pours a verdant birth.

The herbs wide ſhed abroad their rich perfume
And nods Amaracus its ſhady gloom.
The Nile, whoſe head retires with ſecret pride,
Proclaims God's preſence with exulting tide;
Riding on waves, he ſpouts ſublime in air
His ſecret ſprings, and all his ſands appear;
Where channels meet, or ways confront to ways
Unknown to chuſe, loſt in the doubtful maze:
A winged Beauty, from his bright abode,
With ſword and ſhield, illumes the proper road;
Leſt, ſtraying, into devious paths we run,
Into the murd'rous hands, we toil to ſhun.
His flaming back bluſh'd with cerulean dyes,
The ſame his form, who left his native ſkies,
Forbad the divorce, that I once deſign'd,
And chas'd the jealous darkneſs of my mind.
Our journey, others in the air purſue,
The child protecting from nocturnal dew:
Above his head, they cluſter into rings,
And form a canopy with out-ſpread wings.
Thro' perplex'd travels bold we coaſt the ſhore,
Whoſe vicine fields with cymbals wildly roar.
Tho now the Babe inhales a foreign air,
We yet to Egypt's fartheſt part repair;
Fearful we dread, where ſafety largely reigns,
And think no place too far, from Herod's plains.
Diſpleas'd we flie Hermopolis' proud ſeats,
And Thebes ſeems dang'rous with her hundred gates.
Our travels Memphis to a period brings,
Illuſtrious for the tombs of Egypt's Kings:

A friend receives us in his cottage-ſeat,
Indeed, an humble, but a ſafe retreat.
Along the coaſts, where Nile expands his ſtream,
In ſadly-ſolemn dirge, ſings mournful fame,
That Bethlehem's town deplores her babe-offspring,
(Slain by the mandate of Paleſtine's King)
Who innocent in vain, with tender cries,
Ceaſe with their lives to breathe the luſtred ſkies.
Preſſing her child, the mother-maid turns pale,
Her mind ſtruck with the image of the tale;
For fancy brings the bloody ſcene to view;
The tears, the ſlaughter from the nation drew:
The matron's ſhrieks, that pierce the pitying air,
While thro' the town, they roam'd in wild deſpair:
The earth, with vital purple, that abounds;
And houſes, ſtreaming with infantile wounds.
So when a ſtorm o'er heedleſs ſhepherds reigns,
Low'rs on the woods and ſweeps along the plains;
Struck with the rattling tempeſt, expire the lambs,
And the ſame fate attends their bleating dams.
So infant-carnage on the pavement ſtrew'd,
The forum ſtain'd and chok'd the ghaſtly road.
Hence ſadly true appears the Prophet's ſtrain,
Of many ſhou'd the infant prove the bane:
The ſlaught'ring day gleams yet in fancy's eye,
And from the childleſs mothers draws the ſigh.
Nor long, the author of the barb'rous deed,
Surviv'd the children he ordain'd to bleed;
For ſoon his limbs with foul corroſion ſeiz'd,
He died unpity'd, as he liv'd unprais'd.

Soft o'er my ſleep again the image glides
And bids me leave Nile's monſter-bearing tides. 1021
Back to their country, mindful of the way,
The mother and her infant I convey.
You may deſire to know his tender cares;
Or did his wiſdom far excell his years.
Or did he, rip'ning into roſy bloom, 1025
In infant ſports, his infant days conſume?
But ſhou'd I, to the wonders ſketch'd, engage
To draw the portrait of his buding age,
Unequal to the taſk my voice wou'd fail
And ſhrouding night the day from Ether ſteal.
How oft' did we, unnerv'd with chilling fear 1030
Words, more than mortal, from the infant hear:
In ſtaring horror loſt, how oft have view'd
His tender frame, with ſacred fire bedew'd:
While from his hair drop'd ſparks of liquid blaze 1035
And to ſublime his mien, Heav'n ſhower'd its rays.
When to his Sire he pour'd his private pray'r,
How glow'd his words, how blaz'd his raptur'd air!
His tender mother, as ſhe plied the loom,
Oft ſaw celeſtials ſoft invade the room; 1040
To ſoothe the child, appear in human forms,
Improve with ſtudious labour all his charms
In wild rotations revel on the wing,
And ſhade him with the product of the ſpring.
Yet ſweetly mild he yielded to our ſway, 1045
And all our words was ready to obey.

Till rip'ning time his vigour ſhou'd improve,
To ſpread his Father's glory and his love.

No ſigns divulg'd him to the public ear,
Till he of life attain'd the twice ſixth year.
His virtue then impatient to ſubſide,
Spreads o'er Judea's town a radiant tide.
Religious to our tribes ſhines out a day,
Therefore to this great town I bend my way;
The royal maid departs her ſweet abode,
Her child attends, companion of her road.
The homage paid, our travels we repeat,
Fond of retiring to our humble ſeat;
Our wearied ſteps the ſolar beams illume,
And o'er the ſkies night caſts a pitchy gloom,
Before the abſence of the child we ſpy,
Who ſilent fled his mother's guardian eye.
'Mid friends we trace the fugitive with pain,
And the road's vocal, with his name, in vain.
From the ſad mother guſhes faſt the tear,
And down her iv'ry neck wild flows her hair:
The confus'd locks her neck's pure whiteneſs grace,
And tears ſublime the beauties of her face.
Thus ſoft Amaracus in its Veſtal urn
Whom rains deform, and raging tempeſts ſpurn,
Hangs down its flow'ry head, but ſoon regains
Its tow'ring pride and freſh with odours reigns.
With me reluctant, the ſad mother ſtrays
And thro' the town, we ſought the boy three days;
The

The fourth day ſhines, at laſt in fervent pray'r
Our hopes we fix, and to the Fane repair,
The portal trod, when we the child ſurvey,
(Of all his future pow'r the firſt eſſay)
Rehearſing fervent, 'mid the prieſtly throng,
Of each inſpir'd Bard the raptur'd ſong.
Aſking the page's obſcure ſenſe, in vain;
And ſheding luſtre on each myſtic ſtrain.
The vaulted temple with applauſes rung,
To hear ſuch language from an infant's tongue,
By art untaught, without experience ſage,
A man in wiſdom, and a child in age.
Nor leſs enchanting was his youthful frame;
To view him, crowds, of ſight inſatiate, came;
His roſy looks exhal'd an heav'nly air
Mild beam'd his eyes, and golden flow'd his hair;
His budding childhood had ſuch pleaſing pow'r
Nor yet unfolded bluſh'd his youthful flow'r.
Freſh drops of light guſh'd from his rolling eyes,
Bright as a ſtar new riſing in the ſkies;
Caught, with his beauty nature ſmil'd ſerene,
For breathing loves reſulted from his mien.
Thus ſhines Narciſſus ſweet, above the flow'rs,
Which an uncultur'd field promiſcuous pours,
When thro' his op'ning foliage he diſplays
His purple head, and ſhines with crimſon blaze.
So beams an em'rald, azure to behold,
Inchas'd with ſilver, or in burniſh'd gold.

From this firſt ſcene ſparks of envy roſe,
And for the boy ſtruck out a train of woes;
For malice ſeiz'd the Sages' hearts that hour,
Who rag'd to view, and fear'd his growing pow'r.
Hence now the wrath, that thro' the town proceeds,
And hence the flames, that urge to bloody deeds.
Of omens full, the youth I oft implor'd,
Frugal of life, to fly the hoſtile ſword;
But mountain tow'rs lye veil'd as ſoon by light,
And blazing ſummits burn obſcur'd by night,
As virtue can, forgetful of a name,
Evade the plauſive voice of plumy fame.

Of all his actions, none more rous'd their rage,
Then when ſix luſtres had matur'd his age.
The ſtream obedient to his pow'r divine,
Deep bluſh'd, transfigur'd into roſy wine.
About that time a friend, by blood allied,
In holy marriage gave his virgin-child;
With us the youth was call'd, a welcome gueſt,
To ſhare at once and grace the nuptial feaſt.
While round the genial board the Nobles lay,
And with the feaſt indulg'd the bridal day,
The menial train in wild confuſion roam,
And whiſp'ring murmurs eccho thro' the dome:
That the broad caſks an empty ſpace confine,
Void of the cauſe of mirth, the gen'rous wine.
Touch'd with the fortune of the wedded fair,
My ſpouſe implor'd her ſon the wants to hear.

He ſeem'd diſturb'd, but ſoon inclin'd to aid;
Won by his mother's vows, the bridal maid.
The train he orders ſix large urns to fill,
With water flowing from a gurgling rill.
Soon as the ſtream was offer'd to his view;
Into a bluſh it chang'd its pallid hue.
Bewilder'd with the change, our eyes we roll,
And quaff for water pure the purple bowl.

Lo! of his infancy a ſlight portrait,
And of his Deity the firſt eſſay.
Nor is there cauſe his other deeds to name;
By them this country is extoll'd by fame.
But, if you wiſh to hear a fuller ſtate,
He can the beſt (regarding John) relate,
Who preſent view'd each glorious wonder blaze;
A true attendant on his Maſter's ways.
While a leſs glorious, but a pleaſing care,
My ſteps confin'd to wait my wedded fair.

Joſephus tir'd, in ſilence ſeeks a ſeat.
Your Hero's tales, thus Pontius cries, complete:
What's his Religion; for if truth I hear;
The Syrian tribes one God alone revere:
Eternal, ſpringing from no human cauſe;
Nor houſhold Gods find altars by their laws.
Th' unfiniſh'd ſeries of your God detail,
And all his portents, known to you, unveil.

Weak for the taſk, the Sage's ſtrength retires,
And you, his ſubſtitute, his wiſh requires.
Thus Pontius ſaid: while o'er the crowded train
Silence expands its mute and ſolemn reign: 1560

End of the Third Book.

ARGUMENT to the Fourth Book.

John the Evangeliſt attempts, at the inſtance of Pilate, to give an idea of the nature of God, the eternal birth of Chriſt, the proceſſion of the HOLY GHOST from the FATHER and the SON; the TRINITY of the PERSONS, and the UNITY of the God-head. He then deſcends to the creation of the Angels, the rebellion of ſome of them, and the formation of Man. Next follows an account of the Impatience of the Souls of the Righteous for the coming of the Redeemer to deliver them from their priſon. The birth, preaching, and baptiſm of John the Baptiſt. He cloſes his narrative with that part of Chriſt's life, which ſpeaks him a God, wherein, among many other miracles, he recites the reſuſcitation of Lazarus, the Widow's ſon, and Ruler's daughter; the calling and chuſing of the Apoſtles and Diſciples, together with the feeding of the multitude in the Deſert, and Chriſt's faſting and being tempted in the Wilderneſs.

THE

THE

CHRISTIAD.

BOOK IV.

TO none inferior in a beauteous face,
Where youthful revels ev'ry roſy grace,
The youth declines the taſk with decent pains,
Feigns an excuſe, and ſilent ſtill remains.
Launching at length from this terreſtrial ſpace, 5
The man abſorpt in wonders' cluſt'ring maze;
His ſoul wings ether, and aſcends ſublime,
Where hoſts celeſtial tread the ſtarry clime;
There quaffs the finer air, the liquid blaze,
And on the God with am'rous eyes delays. 10
The queen of birds from humble earth thus ſprings,
And winding ether ſoars on plauſive wings,
Conceals her airy paſſage in the clouds,
And darting on, the neigb'ring ſun beholds;
Undazzled dares on his bright ſource to gaze, 15
And with a ſtedfaſt eye inhale his rays.
Mean while his ſilence all the crowd admir'd,
And mov'd him if in death or ſleep retir'd:
The rapture fled, he thus the Chief addreſs'd,
While a long ſigh roſe heavy from his breaſt. 20

In the beginning the Almighty Sire,
Nature's ſole ſource, held o'er all an empire,
Struck out no ſtars, the ether to adorn ;
Produc'd no world as yet, nor was time born :
The azure plains no ſtreaming lights o'erflow'd,
Whatever then exiſtence had, was God.
Where'er he dwelt, himſelf was his own ſpace,
And what contain'd him, was his own embrace.
He had an only Son, no Goddeſs born,
Nor new from mortal womb inhal'd the morn,
But in his Sire's eternal mind conceiv'd,
Th'eternal Son a wond'rous birth receiv'd ;
No human limbs his ſacred form confin'd,
But pure and ſpiritual as his Sire's mind.
The Word in the paternal breaſt conceal'd,
To the ſoft air no voice had yet reveal'd.
The Word almighty from commencement free,
And whoſe celeſtial reign no end ſhall ſee ;
From whom the ſea and ſkies receiv'd their birth,
And who from nothing call'd the verdant earth.
The Sire is God, ſo is his only Son ;
Two Gods to hold them, yet with caution ſhun,
As the ſame Godhead in them common flows,
So the two Perſons but one God compoſe.
The Love, proceeding from the Sire and Heir,
We name the Spirit, and as God revere.
The Father, Son, and Ghost, as God we own ;
Three diſtinct Persons, and the Godhead One.
This Holy Ghoſt fans Ether, Earth and Seas,
And all things flouriſh by his ſacred Breeze.

What may ſurprize, the God whom we behold,
Tho' made a man, and human limbs infold,
Now rules Olympus with his Father-God;
Arranging all things with his Godhead's nod;
Unbounded in the narrow wilds of ſpace,
And preſent totally in ev'ry place.
For God diffus'd fills all creation's plan,
Too fine for touch to feel, or eye to ſcan.
So the rich luſtre that on the world ſtreams,
From the Sun guſhes in full floods of beams:
Nor without Phebus glows the ſcatter'd blaze,
Nor Phebus reigns without his crown of rays.

What mov'd the God ſuch labours to ſuſtain,
And roam, to death expos'd, from pain to pain;
From its firſt cauſe I will the theme purſue,
And ope the latent proſpect to your view.
The heav'nly orbs and earth which you behold
The Lord had ſcarce into exiſtence roll'd;
The Father made, won with eternal love,
The Spirits, who in his bright regions move;
The feather'd train, with the unbodied ghoſts,
The ſwift celeſtials, and the thrice three hoſts,
To cull the pleaſures, and at large to ſhare,
Which he enjoy'd, and his coeval heir.
Some burſt at once into a grateful praiſe,
And to their Author God inton'd the lays.
But luſt of rule (who unreveng'd could bear?)
The greater number ſwell'd with regal care,

Urg'd them to graſp the throne with dazzl'd mind,
Their wiſhes impotent, their fury blind.
But full of wrath, God bids his cohorts riſe,
And hurl the crowd inglorious from the ſkies;
Baffl'd their ſcheme, they lie in caves depreſs'd,
O'er which eternal night and horror reſt.

Hence man's creation; to whoſe ample ſway
Jehovah gave the earth and azure ſea.
The brute creation bends to his domain,
The tribes that glide with fins along the main;
The feather'd crowd, that wing the airy ſpace,
And all the dreary mountains ſavage race;
To him and to his line the ſeats are given
Which once the angel-rebels held in Heav'n.
He ſaw all nature blooming for his uſe,
Solely prohibited one tree's produce;
But ſoon enamour'd of the fruitful boughs,
And too uxorious toward a preſſing ſpouſe,
(Herſelf the Serpent's prey) in a ſad hour,
He broke the mandate of the ſupreme Pow'r.
The fruit prophan'd no ſooner by his taſte,
Than He, who pours the ſtorm thro' Ether's waſte,
Thro' redd'ning clouds bids claps of thunder break,
And wrathful ſeems his vengeance to awake,
Which Adam bore, and all his race ſhall bear,
That drink the luſtre of the ſolar ſphere.
Soon barriers ſtop'd the paſſage to the ſky,
And horrid roſe an impious progeny.

A group of crimes defil'd the virgin-earth;
Then fraud and daring luſt emerg'd to birth,
Hence to hard toil was human kind betray'd,
Hence ſprung ſad care, and death his gate diſplay'd.
Diſeaſes ghaſtly ſtalk'd with pining grief,
Baſe want and famine hopeleſs of relief.
Was man obedient, he had felt no care,
But breath'd thro' many years this vital air.
Then man unſkill'd and thoughtleſs rang'd the fields,
Untutor'd in the good, that order yields.
Howe'er they mov'd their God by victims ſlain,
From ſtorms to ſhield their flocks, and bladed grain.
Two thouſand years their ſtate unvary'd ey'd:
At length God gave his vengeance to ſubſide.
For in Olympus tho' they found no place,
Yet ſtill to civilize the wand'ring race,
The ſupreme pow'r refin'd them by advice,
Struck out new laws and modes of ſacrifice.
Our tribes he form'd; the knife to mark them glow'd
With blood, that from the circumciſion flow'd.
Then with the future truth the bards diſtent
On the rejoicing world their numbers ſpent;
The time was rolling, when the forbidd'n ſky
Should to the pious wide ſpontaneous fly.

Beneath earth's circle, in a dark retreat,
The pious ghoſts, mean while, devoutly wait

The purple dawn of the redeeming days,
Once the fond ſubject of prophetick lays.
With hands uprear'd, they beg the ſupreme Sire
To put a period to his burning ire,
Nor, for the devious fault of one, deface
From the expanded earth the human race.
Spare, Almighty! ſpare, (was the gen'ral cry)
Give us at length to claim the promis'd ſky,
From whoſe bland light, theſe regions long detain;
Nor have you on us life beſtow'd in vain.
But if ſome trace of former faults remains,
Unlock your ſprings, and lave benign the ſtains.
Oh what celeſtial ſhall Heav'n's moiſture pour,
And kind refreſh us with the holy ſhow'r?
Drop dew ye orbs, that wind the blue ſerene;
Aid us ye clouds, diſtent with ſacred rain.
Come chiefly you, whom ages wiſh'd to ſee;
To whom with awe hell bends the trembling knee,
Jehovah born; bright as the dew deſcend;
And hither ſwift from ſtarry ether tend;
Break down the gates, that block the ſacred way,
And, cloth'd with pow'r, glide from eternal day.
Such was the invocation of their ſtrains;
To which, the potent Sire touch'd with their pains,
And full the Angel—damage to repair,
From high Olympus bent a fav'rite ear.
Tho' at his nod Heav'n's gate might open wide,
Or ſome wing'd minſtrel from Olympus glide,
Free the ſad captives from the gloomy plains,
And waft their ſouls to ether's ſtarry fanes;

His Godhead ſtill to print on human kind,
And with a glorious act, their love to bind,
He ſent his Son from his ethereal throne, 165
Made man, for man's tranſgreſſion to atone:
But unconfeſs'd on earth, leſt he ſhould ſtand,
Or be expell'd an exile from the land,
Himſelf proclaiming God's own Progeny,
Forbidd'n by the ſtatutes of the country, 170
He ſent a Bard his advent to proclaim,
A native of theſe regions, John by name,
Whom to Zacharias Eliza bore,
Sterile her womb, her head with old age hoar.
He lab'ring with a Prophet's ſacred throws 175
To the glad world the God incarnate ſhews.
In infancy he from the world retir'd,
With love of woods, and brooks, and mountains fir'd:
His manſion are deep caves with horrors rude,
Uncultur'd ſhrubs bear fruitage for his food; 180
Or hollow trunks their honey wild diſtill,
And for his cup clear rolls the lucid rill.
Religious to the ſight his frame appears,
Rough veſted with a camel's ſhaggy hairs.
Yet tho' a ſolitaire he pours his ſtrains 185
To mountains, ſandy ſhores and deſert plains;
But woodland ſhades can't quench fair virtue's beam,
The vicine towns ſoon catch the Hermit's fame;
On him, as wafted from the ſkies, they gaze,
(The theme divine of Sibyl's raptur'd lays) 190
Who ſhould, from ſhades o'ercaſt with dreary night,
Tranſlate the human world to fields of light.

And now full crowds invade his wild retreat,
His race demanding and buſineſs of his ſtate:
Was he the One, who from the ſkies ſhould glide 195
To ſuccour wretched man at once, and guide?
He cry'd, beneath his ſylvan bow'r reclin'd,
Hear and rejoice, you race of human kind;
Long have you ſtray'd imbrown'd with night's dark hue;
The light now dawns, you wiſh'd ſo oft to view; 200
But ſpare to view me as the promis'd flame,
(For undeſerving honours I diſclaim.)
As Lucifer precedes, with ſlender ray,
The matin ſun, and faint announces day:
So I foretel your flood of radiance ſhines, 205
And God himſelf ſhall viſit your confines;
The God ſhall on your mortal plains be ſeen,
Confeſs'd a mortal in his frame and mien:
At his approach your feſtal joy diſplay,
With bluſhing carpets ſtrew his ſacred way; 210
Your verdant fields with flow'ry chaplets dreſs,
And in your holy pomp the God confeſs.
Righteous, mean while, and moral be your fame,
And let me lave your follies in the ſtream.
With the celeſtial Spirit, he will clean 215
Guilt's firſt contagion, and each ſinful ſtain:
Then the whole world with wonder ſhall behold
Itſelf tranſfigur'd to an age of gold.

These words pronounc'd, the neighb'ring towns deſcend,
Where Jordan's ſtreams along the vallies bend;
The ſkies imperial they for peace addreſs,
And all their faults ſpontaneouſly confeſs.
With hollow palm the Baptiſt ſcoops the waves,
And with the ſtream their naked bodies laves.
The God in private mixes with the band,
And for luſtration ſeeks fair Jordan's ſtrand;
That he might (veſted with a mortal frame)
The rites perform, that man's attention claim.
That after ages need not bluſh to ſhare
The ſolemn duties, which employ'd his care.
Soon as the Lord had 'mid the water ſhone,
The Baptiſt's viſual orbs the Godhead own,
And while his hands are rear'd to Ether's beams,
His ſuppliant knees compreſs the wond'ring ſtreams.
Abſorp'd with rev'rence he declines to ſhed
The luſtral moiſture on his ſacred head:
But paſſive ſoon to the divine command,
He laves his body with a trembling hand:
With luſtre purpled, Jordan's ſtreams appear,
And peals of thunders rend th'ambient air:
Lo! from the ſkies a Dove directs his flight,
His wings with gold, his back with ſilver bright,
Sloping his blazing courſe, his plumage ſpreads,
And breathes his holy influence on their heads.
The Father's lays along Olympus run,
Impaſſion'd with the love he bears his Son.

Mean while a youthful band of Heav'n's bright
ſphere,
On wings incumbent preſs the crowded air:
Are charg'd with drapery of a ſnowy hue,
In act their Sovereign's mandate to purſue;
Quickly to dry his darling Son's moiſt frame,
And treſſes, droping with the ſacred ſtream.

The God when he had ſhar'd the holy rite,
Forſakes the tumid flood, and ſteals from ſight.
At whoſe receſs the Baptiſt pours this ſtrain,
To all the banks throng'd with a num'rous train:
The God is come, he dwells on earth, behold;
By all deſir'd and oft by me foretold,
Mild as a lamb, on incens'd altars ſlain,
Who by his blood ſhall waſh each human ſtain;
A willing victim to his Father fall;
Then own your God, and on your Maſter call.

The Bard no longer haunts the wilds and groves;
But now from town to town inceſſant roves;
Diſtilling on the ear in raptur'd ſtrains;
The promis'd God treads earth, the Godhead reigns!
But few believ'd till God, himſelf proclaim'd
By deeds, above the reach of mortals, fam'd.
For thirty years the Lord himſelf conceal'd
His deeds obſcure, his Godhead unreveal'd:
But firſt he calls twelve friends among his train
To ſhare his fortune and laborious pain.
Nor think he fix'd on them of lineage great,
Or taught by nature, or by art deceit:

His choice were men, whoſe veins roll'd vulgar gore,
Of manners ſimple, and in fortune poor.
Among us five from ſmall Betheſda came,
Employ'd to lure the fiſhes from the ſtream
With guileful hook; or launch into the main,
Where ſcaly ſhoals enrich the wat'ry plain.
When he deſir'd, we ſhould attend his lore,
I was my nets repairing on the ſhore.
My brother James obſerv'd with watchful eye,
Laſhing the ſhore with panting life, the fry.
Andrew and Peter near us plough'd the ſtream;
Brothers, the ſame their thought and art the ſame.
Philip likewiſe, by blood to me ally'd
Left at the call his nets and briny tide:
Thomas and Thaddeus next increas'd the train,
And Simon ſprung from Galilean Cane,
With the like art, whoſe breaſt was wont to glow,
Fond of the flood and to the fiſh a foe.
For Alpheus James by blood to Simon dear,
Before this time had join'd the ſocial care.
Behold a liſt of an inglorious race,
Names harſh to hearing and of accent baſe!
Nor we alone appear of horrid mien;
Three alſo at the ſummons join'd the train.
Matthew, who glories in no better line;
Whoſe hoary treſſes next to Peter's ſhine,
The liſt Bartholomew and Judas fill,
Judas, the horrid inſtrument of ill.

Scarce can I count the wonders which my eyes
Gaz'd on, or ears imbib'd with deep ſurprize,
In a ſhort ſpace, for only three years roll'd,
Since he embrac'd me in his choſen fold.
Who ſhall this ocean of his deeds eſſay?—
I will, however, your inſtance to obey,
Tho' hard the taſk, exhibit to your view,
And draw, from crowds of progenies, a few.
To tell his actions therefore I'll forbear,
Wrought in the vicine towns, which reach'd your ear.
For all this coaſt with ſoaring fame proceeds,
Illuſtrious with the glory of his deeds.
Has not Bethania's vales with palms embrac'd,
Her ruler lately ey'd from death releas'd?
On whoſe remains, in darkſome tomb outſpread,
The ſun four days his mourning influence ſhed.
What numbers has he call'd from death's drear gate,
How many ſnatch'd from all-devouring fate?
Equal's the taſk, to tell, when Boreas roars,
The waves that frothe, the ſands that ſtrew the ſhores,
As to rehearſe the throngs, with languid breath,
Who morbid ſought him, and return'd with health.
What groups of blind, of deaf-born men, what ſwarms,
Whoſe ears ne'er drunk, nor lips drop'd vocal charms!
The lame to ſeek him bend their limping way;
And carriers thoſe of moveleſs limbs convey:

With ulcerous bodies ſome polluted glow,
And putrid juices from their members flow.
Thoſe guileful draughts in their ſwoll'n frames inſtil,
Whoſe thirſt nor ſtreams can quench, nor human ſkill;
While theſe their limbs, with trembling palſy weak,
Beneath the burthen of their bodies ſhake.
In ſome the fever rages thro' their veins;
Some lie, their members torn with unknown pains.
In others while diſturbing furies riſe,
The mind deſtroy, and redden in the eyes.
The ſad diſeaſes ſhun his holy ſight,
Or from his touch wing ſwift their baleful flight.
The patient hence exalts his healthful head,
And bounds rejoicing from his ſickly bed.
And hence his walks contain a morbid train,
The road, the forum, and the ſacred Fane.
The dead felt not his power, 'till Sidon's land
Gave him to lofty Naim with his band.

A range of lights in long proceſſion flames,
And thro' the town a dewy ſadneſs ſtreams.
Now on his bier the mournful cauſe appears,
A beauteous youth dead in his bloom of years,
The ghaſtly white ſpread o'er his pallid face,
Blots out the crimſon of each youthful grace.
So preſs'd by oxen coming from the plains,
The Hyacinth reſigns his purple ſtains.

Or thus the roſe, crop'd by ſome virgin, lies 355
'Mong ſhaggy thorns obſcure, decays, and dies.
The wretched mother, with her ſorrow wild,
Roams thro' the city, and laments her child.
Sanguine with mangl'd cheeks her hands appear,
And down her back diſhevell'd flows her hair. 360
Touch'd with her mien, and wounded by her cries,
The matrons ſwarm, and fill with ſhrieks the ſkies.
The men deplore by ſoft compaſſion led
The childleſs mother and her widow'd bed.
When the God ſaw the corſe with paleneſs fade, 365
And the ſoft down the youthful features ſhade;
He bids the tears to ceaſe, the pomp to ſtand,
And moving ſoothes the body with his hand.
Life moves the corſe: and wond'rous to the eyes,
Amid the crowd the youth is ſeen to riſe; 370
Forſakes his bier and with a ſoft embrace,
His parent claſps, and bids her ſorrow ceaſe.

A few moons after, he from death's drear ſhade
To blooming life reſtores a beauteous maid;
All vital heat and breath forſook the fair, 375
And flying vaniſh'd into common air.
Jairus the Virgin's ſire the wonder ey'd,
Jairus rich, facund, and the people's pride.
Touch'd with a friend's diſtreſs he bids the ſtream
To wine tranſvers'd aſſume a roſy flame. 380
The ſun begun to ſhoot his weſtern rays,
When on a mountain plac'd, the Lord ſurveys

Of males and females a promiſcuous knot,
Themſelves forgeting, and their cares forgot;
Who of his perſon fond, forſake their home,
And with him ruſh into the deſert's gloom.
With tender pity mov'd he here delays;
For on their faſts three ſuns had ſpent their blaze;
No corn ſtood near, nor towns to purchaſe meat;
Nor was the fruitage then matur'd by heat.
By chance a boy is found, who five loaves bore,
And too ſmall fiſhes, his nutricious ſtore,
Which his fond mother, to ſupport his ways,
Involv'd in balmy graſs and myrtle leaves.
But what were theſe to feed a num'rous train?—
And now his friends ſad with deſpair complain;
His little ſenate he to ſoothe them forms,
And into hope, their fears thus mildly charms.
Tho' in the ſubject vale vaſt numbers ſtray,
None ſhall retire unſatisfy'd this day.
Then to the ground without delay he falls
And on his Sire ſupreme thus rev'rend calls:
Hail mighty Parent! by whoſe ſuns and rains
All things with food the fecund earth ſuſtains;
If once, in wilds, you fed the Hebrew-race,
By ſheding banquets from the heav'nly ſpace;
If to no ſeed creation owes its birth,
And once were nothing ether, ſeas, and earth;
Propitious hear, dire famine chaſe away,
Nor let ſo many thouſands be her prey.
He ceas'd to pray; and on the graſſy plain,
Outſpreads, with hunger keen, the num'rous train,

Then placid cuts the loaves with niceſt care,
And ſtrictly deals to each his ſcanty ſhare.
Five thouſand men for food then preſs'd the green; 415
When lo! (heard with ſurprize, with wonder ſeen)
The little portions in their hands embrac'd,
Augment and ſwell into a gen'rous feaſt.
The gnawing rage of hunger now ſedate,
With copious liquids and mirac'lous meat; 420
Of ample ſize twelve baſkets ſcarce contain
The copious ſcraps that of the feaſt remain.

Another wonder lately was diſplay'd;
A tree diffuſes wide a leafy ſhade:
Beneath it oft the weary traveller ſtood 425
And drain'd the fruitage of their ſparkling flood.
Imbrown'd with duſt our Hero paſs'd that way,
And ſought to quench his thirſt, the blooming ſpray
In vain: The tree with barren branches waves,
And ſpends its juices in luxurious leaves. 430
His diſappointment flaſhes on the boughs,
And the tree feels the terror of his vows.
Inſtant I ſaw the tree and branches die,
And the leaves circling in a whirlwind flie.

Nor to his pow'r leſs ſubject are the ſeas; 435
The waves, or ſwell, or reſt, as he decrees:
I ſaw fierce Boreas on the billows wild,
Subdue his rage, and at his word breathe mild.

Scarce has bright Cynthia thrice her circle roll'd,
Since on the ſea a midnight tempeſt growl'd:
Smooth flow'd the waves, in whiſpers blow'd the wind,
When firſt with nets we ſought the ſcaly kind.
But ſoon the waves our ſhatter'd bark o'erflow'd,
And death on each contending billow rode.
When lo! our Chief, whom on the diſtant ſhore
We left attentive to the ſurges roar;
Comes treading light the ſurface of the main,
Secure amid the wa'try hurricane.
Our eyes at the approaching figure fade,
Doubtful to judge it ſolid or a ſhade.
So ſwiftly without oars he ſkim'd the main
Till he confeſs'd himſelf in this ſoft ſtrain:
Whence flow your fears, and why your hope ſubſide?
Hence in my words hereafter ne'er diffide.
He ceas'd, and mounts the bark, the ſinking prey,
To the devouring fury of the ſea;
Forbids by nod the raging ſtorm to blow,
And free from threats, the ſurges gently flow.
The ſtorm thus huſh'd, with ſwifteſt oars we glide,
Safely to ſhore, along the dimpling tide.

The harbour gain'd, an event ſoon befell,
Wond'rous to view and ſtranger ſtill to tell;

The Magiſtrates, on our arrival, ſtood
On the green margin of the briny flood,
Claiming, by cuſtom due, the yearly fee, 465
Impos'd on each by ancient Kings decree.
While they delay'd his placid ſpeech to hear,
Chriſt whiſp'ring drop'd theſe words in Peter's ear.
Haſte hence and caſt the line into the ſeas,
And the firſt fiſh the fraudful hook ſhall ſeize, 470
Diſſect; the victim ſoon ſhall drop to view
What ſhall abſolve the debt to Cæſar due.
The Sage obeys: the prize now beats the ſhore
Within whoſe jaws ſparkles the tribute ore.

A riſing horror always writhes my mien, 475
As often as my mind lives o'er this ſcene:
Culling of late ſome fiſh caſt by the flood,
A man of furious mind beſide me ſtood.
His eye-balls, thrown about with wildneſs, gleam'd,
And from his mouth a frothing moiſture ſtream'd: 480
If fame ſings true, a lawleſs Hymen led
His guilty parents to the genial bed.
There joys to taſte forbidden by our rite,
What time the land to mourn the tribes invite,
But they enjoy'd not long their foul delight; 485
The crime commenc'd and ended in one night:
For 'mid his joys the baſe adulterer dies,
And into air his wicked ſpirit flies,

When urg'd her throes, from ether ſhot a flame,
And lambent round, conſum'd the lab'ring Dame, 490
And was not ſnatch'd from her cut womb the birth,
Both had, at once, reſign'd their lives in death.
Their brother's orphan child the ſiſter nurs'd,
Who with the pain due to his parents curs'd, 494
His eyes with light, nor ears with ſounds were fill'd;
Nor human accents from his lips diſtill'd;
But when arriv'd to youth's vermilion age,
He foam'd with madneſs and infernal rage.
An hundred peſts from Erebus' dark ſhade,
On his weak mind an hundred furies prey'd. 500
Thro' his deep throat (who can the tear refrain?)
They pour their ſhouts, and wake their howling pain,
And when chance freed him from his guardian's hands,
His irons broken. and his knotted bands,
All ſhun'd the ſhocking and the foaming ſight, 505
And ghaſtly ſought their roofs with headlong flight.
Thro' devious mazes now he joy'd to roam,
Forgetful of his friends and native home.
Choſe, ſocial with the brutes, the ſylvan gloom,
Lodg'd in ſome rocky cave, or mould'ring tomb. 510
Thus poor he rang'd the wilds with haggard eyes,
And with his naked body brav'd the ſkies.
This wretched man, his hands faſt bound with chains,
His friends and kindred led, by cogent means,

Before the Lord; that touch'd with his diſtreſs, 515
He might perhaps his miſery redreſs.
But ſcorning aid he ſtrove his bands to tear;
While his fierce cries aſcend the ſtarry ſphere;
The warrior bull, with cords to altars led,
Thus toſſes thro' the town his roaring head. 520
His dewlaps white with foaming rage appear,
And with his horns he wounds the yeilding air.

A ſervile crowd with ſticks around him glow,
And his back ecchoes with each frequent blow.
While to their gates the vulgar bend their flight, 525
And ſafe at diſtance view the dang'rous fight:
So rag'd the youth, at length his friends with pain,
Before the God the captive wretch conſtrain.
His holy aid they lowly bending ſue
To calm his ſpirit and his rage ſubdue. 530
The pious Chief, with hands rear'd to the ſkies,
Invokes his Father to his enterprize:
When lo! a prodigy both ſtrange and foul;
Dogs ſeem to bark and rav'nous wolves to howl.
The furious wretch ſuch bellowing clamours pours 535
Loud, as from mountains ruſh the headlong ſhow'rs.
Should Lake-Velinus burſt by chance his bed,
And o'er the vales his ſtagnant waters ſpread,

Towns float in waves, an ocean drowns the plains,
And Rome o'erwhelm'd, turns pallid for her fanes.
Now cracks are heard as when the ſupreme King
His thunder rolls and ether's temples ring.
The noiſe now emulates the ocean's rage;
Now feigns the claſh, when hoſtile ſpears engage:
Now rattling chains ſeem now the ear to wound,
And earth and heav'n return the direful ſound.
While the God chides the horrid fiends delay:
Within the wretch they trembling ſue to ſtay.
Why, God's true Son, you bid us to retire,
From this man's body ſubject to our ire?
Grant us at leaſt to invade this briſtl'd band;
(A herd of ſwine then graz'd beſide the ſtrand.)
Nor plunge us into gulfs with ſhades imbrown'd,
Nor into nether earth's opaque profound.
He nods conſent: lo! by the furies ſeiz'd
The ſwine rove wild with madd'ning pangs diſeas'd,
So rages keenly ſharp each inward gueſt,
The herd ſtray furious and enjoy no reſt;
Then headlong plunge into the azure plain,
And in the waves extinguiſh life and pain.
The youth, mean time, his captive arms unbound,
His weary'd limbs diffuſes on the ground,
Biting the earth with proſtrate viſage lies,
And as expiring draws the painful ſighs.
To whom God's offspring tends, and with his hands
His eyes diſcloſes, and his ears expands:

His eyes drink light, lo! from his tongue words glide,
And in his heart the frequent throbs ſubſide.
With Chriſt's applauſe, crowds wound the bright abode;
Jehovah born confeſs him, and a God.

What can't his pow'r perform? at his command
We chaſe diſeaſes from the morbid band;
Sickneſs retires ſoon from our preſent aid,
And many diſappoint death's gloomy ſhade;
Nor ſtudious art we boaſt nor mortal care
From painful beds the languid group to rear,
But bid fair health invade the roſy frame,
By calling thrice upon our Maſter's name.
Among the hoſt that ſought us to be heal'd.
On one alone our invocation fail'd:
The more we ſtrove to chaſe the helliſh gueſt,
The fiercer pangs he rous'd within the breaſt:
When God aſſiſtance brought, by goodneſs mov'd,
Our little faith in him he diſapprov'd;
Would you from bodies caſt ſuch fiends? he cries,
From food abſtain and ſupplicate the ſkies.
Nor ſhall this pow'r on you alone be ſhed,
But ev'ry one who ſhall my glory ſpread,
(If his faith ſtaggers with no dubious air)
Each wond'rous action may ſecurely dare.
Mountains will change their place at his command,
And headlong rivers with attention ſtand.

Go then reſolv'd in ſtable faith confide
And the bright ſeed of radiant truth ſpread wide.
Sprinkle the night-ſepulchr'd earth with rays,
And be mankind's and offus'd nature's blaze.

Thus having ſpoke, ſeventy men he choſe,
To ſhare our labours and to feel our woes.
Yet his heart throb'd with ſighing grief replete,
So few the actors and the taſk ſo great.
The peaſant ſo, who with aſſiduous toil,
And hundred ploughs tills his paternal ſoil:
When the ripe wheat nods yellow to the plain,
And barns wide wait to hide the copious grain,
With ſadneſs views his ſmall domeſtic band,
And roams for aid o'er all the vicine land.

How oft men's thoughts and latent cares he told,
Which God alone could poſſibly behold.
Our dubious minds, our vain and tacit fears,
He angry echoed in our wond'ring ears.
When his foes glow'd with direful vengeance blind,
And dread deſtruction labour'd in their mind,
He oft diſplay'd their ſchemes with ire replete,
And all the fruſtrate rancour of their hate.

Nor is the woman's cure unknown to fame,
Who twice ſix years pin'd with a ſanguine ſtream.
Exhauſted now with her diſeaſe's pain,
She ſought by touching Chriſt her health to gain;

While round him youths and ruſhing people ſtream,
She mov'd behind and touch'd his robe's extreme.
Lo! at her touch her old diſtemper flies.
And to retire unſeen ſhe vainly tries;
But God ſoon felt the trembling flying fair,
And with ſoft counſel fill'd her liſt'ning ear.
Nor is the time long laps'd, ſince I have ſeen
The Lord burſt either from his mortal mien,
Or bathe his body in ſuch radiant blaze,
As floods the Sun, when he darts down his rays.

Theſe wond'rous acts reſulting from his nod,
And others, which I ſaw, acclaim the God.
His mortal nature yet he ne'er forgot,
And willing bore the woes of human lot,
Our model to purſue: for oft at feaſts
He mixes chearful with the choſen gueſts:
In council when the citizens convene,
He's often pleas'd to join the civil train:
And when the nation 'gainſt him furious riſe,
He, as a man, their hate and temple flies,
The caverns ſeeks, while impotently loud,
The foes aſſault, ſhap'd like his frame, a cloud.
But when John's recent murder fame had told,
Scarce yet has Sol his annual meaſure roll'd;
With whoſe lop'd head the King diſtain'd the floor,
His brother's raviſh'd ſpouſe urg'd to reſtore.
The Lord, I mark'd, impatient to recede,
From town and crowds ſought quick the wood's deep ſhade.

Nor hell's grim King, baſe foe of human kind,
From right who labours to divert the mind,
Abſtain'd his double nature to annoy,
The God to ſcorn or manhood to deſtroy.
Our Chief once fled his friends and waiting band,
And gain'd the ſummit of a ſhady land.
Twice twenty ſuns ſat on him without food;
Twice twenty nights their ſtarry courſe renew'd.
The Prince of darkneſs thought the preſent hour
Moſt apt his baleful vengeance then to pour.
Firſt to his aid he call'd a numerous hoſt
From the ſad borders of the infernal coaſt;
But when he found his malice vainly ſhed,
He ſhock'd the horrors of his beaſtly head.
His hopes of hurting now in words confide,
And from his lips theſe artful accents glide.
I own thy birth divine, thyſelf a God;
And all things are obedient to thy nod,
Why ſuffer famine o'er thy limbs to ſpread?
But ſudden change theſe ambient rocks to bread.
The God perceives the fraud, and thus replies,
Nor on ſole bread my mortal frame relies,
But on my Father, whoſe repeated ſtrains
Chaſe food's deſire, and hunger's gnawing pains.
He ſaid; tho' conquer'd in his firſt eſſay
The foe deſiſts not, and renews the fray;
Inſults on inſults ardently repeats,
And, tho' repell'd, thrice urges his deceits;
With luſt of rule now ſtrives his mind to fire,
And quench with love of praiſe his pure deſire.

So when the winds along the ocean roar,
The threat'ning waves laſh thick the foaming ſhore.
But on the rocks when their vain rage they ſhed,
They glide confounded to their azure bed.
To ſtop the frauds foreſeen, the God forbears,
And gives the foe to forge his fruitleſs ſnares.
To lead him paſſive to the Temple's ſpire
And to rough rocks whoſe brows in air retire.
Juſt when the foe with hope deluſive ſmiles,
And thinks to reap the harveſt of his wiles,
Our Chief begins his Godhead to diſplay,
And drags the lurking miſchief into day.
The horſe, thus free from his coercive reins,
Ranges at large the broad expanded plains,
Joys the purſuing menials to elude,
Now near them moves, now crops the verdant food.
But when they hope the captive ſteed to ſeize,
He neighs, high ſtarts and ſcours the graſſy ſpace.
With ſchemes defeated and with anger fir'd,
The foe ſtalk'd fierce, and from the God retir'd.
Sent from his Sire a thouſand Angels wing
The ſkies, and to their God refreſhment bring.

Would you the origin of their hatred know,
Whence the people 'gainſt the priſoner glow,
They beſt can tell; for ſure his life's not ſtain'd
With the foul acts, of which he is arraign'd.
For, of mankind, than he, they muſt confeſs,
None better is, more eaſy of addreſs:

To all his ſoft indulgence he extends, 705
Beneficent to foes, as well as friends.
Some blame him ſuffering thoſe, who him annoy,
When, by his nod, he might his foes deſtroy.
Along the coaſts of Sidon once he ſtray'd
A weary trav'ller, in the midnight ſhade, 710
Deſir'd beneath their roofs his limbs to reſt,
But the barbarians heard not his requeſt.
We penſive call'd the SUPREME from his ſeat,
Quick to revenge his SON's inhuman treat.
On the baſe people dart celeſtial fire, 715
And cauſe their walls in vengeful flames expire.
With indignation at our vows he glow'd,
And for the wicked town with pity flow'd.

Tho' conſcious of his foes, he deign'd reſort
Their domes, and ſeek the roofs of bad report; 720
If by advice he might ſubdue their pride,
And, taught truth's walk, their paſſions might ſubſide.
So Zaccheus, Matthew, and a thouſand more
Forſook their former, for a better lore.
Our Chief was led by error, yet who thought 725
This practice charg'd as a contagious fault.
But he to miniſter his healing aid
In ſearch of patients thro' the city ſtray'd;
Weeping their ſtate; from minds, offus'd with night,
He chas'd the clouds, and gave celeſtial light. 730
A taſk moſt pleaſing to the Angel-choir;
And to their God, the Angels' mighty Sire.

For this, he left Olympus' blazing vault
And the glad anthems of the ſky he taught,
When any baſe immortal ſon of earth,
To whom the fouleſt crimes refer their birth,
Begins at juſtice's ſhrine, with awe to bend,
And virtuous deeds religiouſly defend;
Joy thrills thro' all the natives of the ſkies,
And Ether rings with their applauding cries.
The ſhepherd thus rich in a thouſand ſheep,
Before night ſeals his eyes in balmy ſleep;
Should he imprudent leave, the number told,
But one behind him, of the bleating fold!
Penſive returns, reviſits ev'ry glade,
And with his eyes pervades each latent ſhade.
At length he ſpies the fleecy wand'rer ſteal,
In queſt of food, thro' a ſequeſter'd vale.
Claſp'd in his arms forbids his charge to roam
A fugitive, forgetful of her home.
His ſweeteſt babes to kiſs their father burn,
And the houſe ſmiles at the loſt ſheep's return.
Wherefore an ear to female tales he deigns;
For lately paſſing o'er Samaria's plains,
By chance he ſpies approaching him a dame
From Sichar's ancient walls to ſcoop the ſtream;
He ſues her ſuppliantly her vaſe to fill,
And taſtes the bounty of the limpid rill,
Who ſonorous rivers and the ſea domains,
And the vaſt globe bedews with copious rains;
At whoſe command the thirſty crowd to ſave,
Rocks liquid grew and pour'd a bounteous wave.

Mean while our wonder ſwells, in thought conceal'd;
But, her admoniſh'd, and her faults reveal'd,
The Lord delivers from profoundeſt night,
And laves with beams of never-fading light.
The pious Sires full of parental care,
Oft brought their train of youths and virgins fair,
Their flowing locks with roſeat chaplets crown'd,
Or with ſoft fillets of green foliage bound;
To have their hearts with love of virtue fir'd,
And their young minds with gen'rous thoughts inſpir'd.
His infant audience placid he addreſs'd,
And with his touch ſo purified the breaſt,
That vice in vain might wear her magic charm,
And hell, thro' all its reign, to cruſh them, arm.

By words and acts he chiefly ſhew'd the hate
He bore to minds with tow'ring pride elate:
I and my 'ſociates, as our Chief we ſought,
Reclin'd our weary limbs beſide a grot,
O'er whoſe dark gate, an awful elm high weaves
An arch of branches and a waſte of leaves.
Conſuming time, we mutually demand,
Who ſhould ſuperior be among our band;
Who by our Hero was the moſt approv'd,
The moſt regarded and the beſt belov'd:
Soon as he ſaw us at the grotto's gates
With knitted brows he bids us to relate
The ſubject (ſtrange to tell) of our diſcourſe
And of our clam'rous ſtrife the native ſource.

Our pride ſubſiding, ſilent we remain,
So warm was our diſpute, the theme ſo vain.
Then ſudden in the midſt he leads a child,
Void of ambition, and in deſires mild;
None can, ſays he, aſcend the happy ſkies,
But who ſcorn pride, the love of fame deſpiſe;
For them alone, the ſky its gates diſplays,
Who like this child feel not the throbs of praiſe.
Sooner ſhall clouds dwell in the ſaline main,
And fiſhes live in every verdant plain;
In ether's limpid clime trees fix their root,
And in the blue immenſe their foliage ſhoot.
Still at my mother's pray'r my blood pale runs
The chiefeſt honours ſuing for her ſons:
That when the manſions of the ſkies he gain'd
And with his mighty Sire coequal reign'd;
Then next him we on either ſide might ſtand.
One on his right, and one on his left hand
Not her, (a mother's fondneſs ſure's no crime)
But us, he ſudden views with looks ſublime;
Juſtly reproves with better words and brows,
Who prompted with vain art ſuch ſimple vows.
To cruſh the proud delights the Pow'r ſupreme;
So hateful is the love of praiſe and fame.
Altho' our Chief is equal to his Sire,
Since in external acts they both conſpire,
Still when the muſe to him her voice wou'd raiſe,
He to his Father paints the ſong of praiſe;
And owns, as man, he dares no enterpriſe,
Unleſs aſſiſted by the lofty ſkies.

Hence thoſe, whom from diſeaſes' pain he freed,
He often charg'd to hide the wond'rous deed.
Who by his nod the lepers ſores could heal,
From publick praiſe his virtue to conceal,
Oft ſent the patients to medic'nal ſtreams,
To lave the tabid ulcers from their frames.
Shall I relate what people and what towns,
That ardent wiſh'd he would accept their crowns,
Off'ring to him the royalties of empire,
The robe, the ſceptre, and the ſacred tire?
He was by frequent pray'r urg'd by his band,
By arms to ſeize, and rule the Syrian land;
Then all that ground the victor ſhould obey,
Laſh'd with the ſurges of the ambient ſea.
Soon then the broad-ſpread earth new laws ſhould own,
And ardent pay her homage to his throne.
To ſhun the inſtance of each fervent vow,
He flies and ſeeks the mountain's airy brow.
With livid envy yet and baleful hate,
They cruelly conſpir'd our Hero's fate;
You know they drag'd him 'mid ſuch furious cries,
As if their walls were ſcal'd by enemies.
But, to obey his Sire, a painful ſtore
Of baſeſt inſults he ſerenely bore.
For he might 'ſcape beneath night's friendly ſhade;
Yet to the ſpies he twice himſelf betray'd:
Aw'd by his voice, I ſaw them bending prone;
And heard the ground by their proſtration groan.

No honours from the temple he withdraws,
Nor rites defaces, nor diſſolves their laws;
Yet bids oblations ceaſe of victims ſlain,
And from all ſanguine off'rings to abſtain.
For diff'rent rites are in the words deſign'd;
Then he unveils the Legiſlator's mind.
What may ſurpriſe, they muſt confeſs and ſay,
A bard ſhould come and quaff this blaze of day,
Alone, who could for us unfold Heav'n's gates,
And waft juſt ſouls from night to ſtarry ſeats.
For him they pant, once promis'd to their ſires,
And in whoſe praiſe the prophets ſtrung their lyres.
Their ſtate how wretched, how depriv'd of ſight!
Who ſee not radiance blazing thro' the night:
Their thirſt how great! who 'mid a copious ſtream
Quench not the paſſion of their parching flame.
Without a perverſe will, whom can't they charm,
Such virtue, merit, and ſuch beauteous form?
Soon as my ears inhal'd his vocal lays,
And eyes the love that o'er his perſon ſtrays,
I left my fortune, mother, country, all,
As many have, nor grieve I at my call.
As from a ſpark a mighty fire grows
And as it waſtes itſelf the fiercer glows;
So as my love each hour dominion gains,
My heart burns brighter with the pleaſing pains:
For who are honour'd once his toils to ſhare,
In ſtrongeſt bands for ever bound adhere.

He us'd no words nor promiſe to deceive,
Nor flatter'd us by fair rewards, believe;
But promis'd all things of the blackeſt hue,
And the parade of our misfortunes drew.
Nor has his promiſe fail'd; condemn'd to roam,
We wander exiles, poor, without an home.
Such groves of ills bud low'ring on our eyes,
That new diſaſters on diſaſters riſe.
One ſhall (whoe'er he is) conſign his breath
In peace, free ſolely from a cruel death.
But, for the reſt of his obedient train,
A diverſe ſtore of ſanguine fates remain.
He bids, mean while, ourſelves and riches ſcorn,
And aid the ſick, the famiſh'd and forlorn;
Dare to be poor, and, by long cuſtom bold,
With ſocial arms adverſity infold.
Hence many did behold our bodies ſtrewn
Along the fields, and ſleep upon a ſtone:
Or crop the teeming ears fatigu'd with toil,
And comfort hunger with the undreſs'd ſpoil.
If any thirſty land a fountain gave,
We prone ſcoop'd with our hands, and quaff'd the wave.
To ſpeak inceſſant if an hundred tongues
I had, join'd with the aid of brazen lungs,
I could not ſtill, beneath our Chief, diſcloſe
What toils we calmly ſuffer'd, or what woes.
For tho' unequal to our cares we ſtood,
Our ſtrength ſome time conſum'd for want of food,

Above the wealth of kings our ſouls ſtill ſhin'd, 905
And tho' in body poor, yet rich in mind.

Nor leſs new crowds approach you may behold,
Ambitious in his train to be enroll'd.
Matrons with hoary Sires, the ſame's their will,
The ſame their certitude, his band to fill. 910
So if a potent King a war ſhould wage,
Againſt ſome town, to make the battle rage,
Now points his weapons, now collects his hoſt,
To ruin the town and maſſacre the coaſt.
Not ſole his cohorts, and his muſter'd bands, 915
But all aſſemble from the neighb'ring lands,
Who of dire wealth enamour'd have in view
The ſpoils of war, unaſk'd the camp purſue.
For crowds who follow of their own accord
Wide fields and roads too ſmall a ſpace afford. 920
Our Hero oft the preſſing crowd evades,
To mountains flying and ſequeſter'd ſhades.
Once trav'lling, I record, beſide a coaſt,
The banks throng'd thick by an unuſual hoſt;
He ſeiz'd a boat, whoſe cord looſ'd from the ſtrand, 925
He launch'd to ſea, an arrow's flight from land:
There ſtop'd, and ey'd the crowded ſhore and plains,
Addreſs'd the people in celeſtial ſtrains,
The ſacred walk of righteouſneſs he ſhew'd,
And ſoftly pointed out fair Ethicks road. 930
The captive throng on ev'ry accent hung
And liſt'ning drank the accent of his tongue.

The ſea whoſe waves, but now, wild beat the ſhore,
Teaz'd with the winds, ceas'd, while he ſpoke, to roar.
Groves, the bird's green cells, without motion ſtand,
Their branches ſhading deep the winding ſtrand.
But hoary dames, meantime the ſilence break,
Surpriz'd ſuch ſacred truths to hear him ſpeak:
With clam'rous joy pronounce his Mother bleſt,
And bleſt the moiſture trickling from her breaſt,
Bleſſing the womb that gave him to our dawn
And the full breaſts his infant lips had drawn.

For man he taught, from earth and night to rear
The human ſoul to Ether's lofty ſphere;
To view the ſtreaming radiance of the ſkies,
And all the fruitleſs cares of life deſpiſe.
Then praiſes peace; ye men fair peace purſue
With gentle vows, and haughty pride ſubdue;
Humble of mind above the want of praiſe,
Honours contemn and riches flaſhing blaze.
Known to miſfortune and with little bleſs'd
Suſtain a life in poverty well vers'd.
Of roſy pleaſure fleeting is the reign;
And nothing's permanent that is terrene.
This earth for you deſigns no manſion-ſeat,
But plan'd for you more glorious regions wait.
From bodies free, your ſouls ſhall glad aſpire
To better worlds, illum'd by my beſt Sire:

Where plenty overflows, peace ſmiles ſerene,
Reſt undiſturb'd, and pleaſures ever reign.
For ſuch rewards how ſhort's the longeſt toil?
For me, who wouldn't leave this earthly ſoil?
For wealth ſo true, for honours ſo ſublime,
Contend, above the waſte of chance or time.
Religious be, a mutual ſoftneſs ſhew,
And feel with melting hearts each other's woe.
Forbid, by ſuffering, wrath and hate to riſe,
And the vague rumours of the throng deſpiſe.
No wound for wound; 'tis nobler to expoſe
The cheek once injur'd to repeated blows.
For praiſe therefore let others point the ſteel,
And beauteous death by battles purchas'd feel;
To all benign, to foes ſoft peace proclaim,
So lightly hold the tranſient noiſe of fame.
But let the mind face death without affright
Nor force pervert it, obſtinately right.
For tyrants may the mortal body ſlay;
And the limbs mangle, to the ſword a prey;
Yet ſtill the ſoul immortal ſafe remains,
And death defies, ſuperior to its pains.
The SIRE ſhall bend, to guard you, from his ſphere,
And none, without his will, dare pluck one hair.
Alone him fear; your pray'rs religious ſhed,
And worthy of HIM your oblations ſpread,
Whom ſeas obey, the land, and fields of air,
And the bright regions of Olympus fear:
The ground embrace in act of homage prone
And proſtrate breathe your vows before his throne.

For, after death, your ſouls, if black with ſtains,
He can commit to hell's infernal pains. 990
Dread not, when lions, loos'd againſt you, roar,
And herds of ſpeckled panthers thirſt for gore;
On the protection of my name rely,
And ruſh intrepid 'mid the ſavage cry:
Soon ſhall the bears, in pity, ceaſe their ſounds, 995
And ſtrive with lambent tongues to heal your wounds.
Of food alſo, mildly ſeclude the care,
Behold who crop the fields, and wing the air,
Nor arts them vex, nor future cares confound;
Yet they with garments and with food abound: 1000
Nature's great parent o'er creation ſtands,
Dealing his aliment with foſt'ring hands;
Inveſts the field with graſs, with flow'rs the mead,
With leaves the trees and mountains brows with ſhade.
Impure deſire expel, fraud and deceit, 1005
And view with mod'rate joy the well-ſpread feaſt.
All loit'ring leiſure from your minds remove;
Another's bed avoid, and lawleſs love.
Depreſs your hopes, forbidden heights to ſoar;
And guide your vows, with moderation's lore. 1010
With your own ſtore of wealth content, behold,
Without a baſe deſire, another's gold.
I ſhall not now the hateful taſk purſue,
Or draw th' influence of other faults to view;
But what ſhall I ſay? Maſk'd with virtue's veil, 1015
Foul thoughts, deceits, and fraudful hearts conceal.

From the polluted mind ſuch peſts eraſe,
On what's now latent, day ſhall pour a blaze.
Forbid alſo the wand'ring eye to roll
Nor, by ſpontaneous glances, wound the ſoul.
Hence to indulge the love of ſpeaking ceaſe,
Deſtruction oft ſucceeds the guardleſs phraſe.
Hence with no falſity your lips prophane;
But, with new morals crown'd, a life maintain.
Yet, ſhould a trace remain of ancient blame,
Lave the contagion in the ſacred ſtream;
To the pure font, whence flows the plenteous rill,
Haſte dames and thirſty ſires and drink at will;
The ſurges of my font for all are roll'd;
Drink deeply then, the wave's not bought with gold.
Thus ſhun death's walk, thus ether's manſion range,
Climes blaz'd with ſtars, obnoxious to no change.
Theſe truths my Father told, the living ſource,
Whence all my words derive their native force.

This ſaid, to heav'n's Monarch he turns the ſtrain,
Who's pleas'd no more with blood of cattle ſlain;
By pray'rs and vows, ſweet peace from ether bear;
And, praying thus, he ſhews the mode of pray'r:

FATHER SUPREME! whoſe ſeat's the lucid ſkies;
To praiſe your holy name, bid nature riſe:
Let now, at length, the promis'd happy days
On the deſiring nations dart their blaze:

Let mortals homage to thy mandates pay,
As the bright tenants of the ſky obey.
Our beings to ſupport, benignly ſhed,
From ether's airy height, our daily bread.
O ever good! let mercy on us flow,
As we forgive the malice of our foe.
Weak to reſiſt, temptation from us chace,
And from all evils guard the human race.

Into hereafter rapt, he pours his lays,
Now ſhrouded deeply with obtuſive rays.
This ſun ſhall vagrant from his ſtation fly,
And drop his mien, the ſplendor of the ſky.
When night with hoſts of light ſhall deck her ſhade,
The dying moon ſhall in an inſtant fade;
Ceaſe on the world to pour her ſilver flood,
And fill her orb, diſtain'd with gleaming blood.
The ſtars, which now their deſtin'd limits roll,
Shall then, diſtracted, ſhoot from either pole;
And the perpetual motion, which gives life
To the celeſtial orbs, and hinders ſtrife,
Ceaſing ſhall from its poles this world deduce,
And 'mid the chaos ſet confuſion looſe.
Our Chief, like thunder rattling thro' pure ſpace,
Shall earth reviſit, with an angel-race,
The lives of mankind ſtrictly ſhall review,
And all their crimes thro' ev'ry maze purſue.
When nature rages with the ambient flame,
The fiery tempeſt ſpreading thro' earth's frame;

On earth new fram'd and in a recent ſky,
The ſhades defunct ſhall to their bodies fly:
Then ſhall the yawning tombs reſign their dead,
Whoſe pious ghoſts the ſubject ſtars ſhall tread,
Plac'd in Olympus thoſe he ſhall enthrone, 1075
Whom, from creation, God foreſaw his own:
A band of winged youths with piercing cries
Fill the arch'd windings of the ambient ſkies.
From the four winds they wake mankind in haſte,
With clang'rous trumpets, to the judgment-ſeat. 1080
The Judge, enthron'd ſublime, with glory glows,
And his tremendous eyes around him throws,
Culls from the multitude the holy band,
And ſeats them glorified on his right hand:
But drives the guilty crowd, a num'rous hoſt, 1085
On his left ſide without recov'ry loſt.
So when the winter's raging ſtorms ſubſide,
And fields are veſted with their vernal pride,
The ſmiling proſpect bids the flock unfold,
And range the meadows verdant to behold. 1090
Firſt for his ſheep rich meads the ſhepherd notes,
But at a diſtance drives the ſmelling goats.
Then ſhall ſome men's tranſparent frames appear
Refulgent, ſhooting thro' the liquid air;
Which once obnoxious to death's cruel pains, 1095
The mighty Sire ſhall purify from ſtains.
Then ſhall they flouriſh in a tranquil ſtate,
Expos'd no more, the ills of life to taſte.
Yet let none hope to have the human clay
Transfer'd to Heav'n's immenſe till the laſt day, 1100

Except a few, whom God, when he ſhall riſe,
From the dark tomb, ſhall tranſlate to the ſkies.
This ſublime ſtation is alone confin'd,
Until that period, to the human mind:
While night and vengeance on the guilty wait,
Of ſin the painful and eternal ſtate.
As we together the ſame couch had preſs'd,
My drooping head reclining on his breaſt;
Our Chief all theſe ſtrange ſcenes had late diſplay'd,
What time the night expands her deepeſt ſhade;
For oft to catch his ſoothing words I ſtrove,
And to him clung, the balm of penſive love.

His deeds perform'd along the Jordan's tide,
Or where Judea's hills in vales ſubſide,
Shall I relate? What crowds he oft addreſs'd?
His ſpeech, now plain, and now in figures dreſs'd.
Himſelf the firſt and final cauſe he ſhews,
The path to tread, the fountain whence truth flows;
The vital light, that gives mankind to ſee,
And us now born, a happy progeny.
Happy the age, that handed us to birth,
And thrice more happy is our natal earth,
Which grant his ſacred Perſon to embrace,
And of his tongue to drink each vocal grace.
This wond'rous favour, in ſucceeding years,
Shall be the envy of our pious heirs.

Thus John rehears'd, while the admiring throng
Liſt'ning inhal'd the ſeries of the ſong:
When lo! ruſh in a wicked Hebrew band,
And of their Chief the pris'ner's death demand. 1130
Joſeph and John to the great Mother ſteal,
But the diſaſters of her Son conceal.

End of the Fourth Book.

ARGUMENT of the Fifth Book.

Pilate, to ſilence their clamours, deſires the Jews to retire and choose a ſpeaker who may inform him of the crimes laid to the Priſoner's charge. While the Jews are deliberating, Judas, ſtung with remorſe for his ſin, enters the Council-chamber, declares the Priſoner's innocence and his own villainy, throws down before them the ſilver-money, the reward of his treachery; departs frantic with deſpair, and hangs himſelf. On the Jews' return, Pilate re-aſcends his judgment-ſeat, and harangues in favour of Chriſt. He is anſwered by Annas in a ſpeech replete with malice and falſhood. All then call for the diſmiſſion of Barabbas, the robber, and the crucifying of Chriſt. Pilate, hereupon, ſends the Priſoner to Herod, who ſends him back to Pilate. Chriſt is whip'd to appeaſe the multitude, but to no purpoſe. The wife of Pontius, frighted by a dream, deſires her ſpouſe not to ſhed the blood of that innocent Man. Mean while Satan, to undo Pilate's reſolution of ſaving the Lord, ſends the Demon FEAR accompanied with SLOTH, whoſe influence prevails on Pilate to give up Chriſt to the fury of his enemies. Theſe, after many inſults, lead him to be crucified. The Angels, ſhocked at the barbarous treatment, prepare to reſcue Chriſt, but are hindered by the eternal Father. The Virgin Mary, hearing of her Son's diſaſters, repairs to Calvary where ſhe ſees her Son crucified between two thieves. Her lamentation. At length Chriſt exhauſted with torments, while all nature ſympathiſes with his fate, expires in pain and agony.

THE

CHRISTIAD.

BOOK V.

THE Roman Chief revolves, with ſtudious care,
The blameleſs Captive by ſome means to ſpare:
His virtue, beauty, and his fame combine
The tale to ſtrengthen, and his birth divine:
Then cries; (while tumults thro' the court ſpread wide) 5
Hebrews, depart, and bid your rage ſubſide:
Among your tribes, let one in order ſhew
The Priſoner's crime, that merits mortal woe.
Indignant they retire, with ſullen tread,
In mind reſolv'd to torment Chriſt 'till dead. 10

Judas, who to the foe his King betray'd,
Now owns his perjur'd crime, by fear diſmay'd;
How ready would the wretch the deed undo,
Which vengeful furies and remorſe purſue?
His mind no reſt, his breaſt no comfort takes; 15
Fair hope now ſleeps, and mad deſpair now wakes.
The

The ſum, that caus'd his pains, with rage he views,
Treaſon's reward, once granted by the Jews;
Brings to the Prieſt's dire hall, then loudly cries,
Behold the wicked bribe, take back the prize. 20
O wretch undone, I ſee, I baſely ſold
God's Progeny, a God himſelf, for gold.
The ſhades, that o'er my mind induc'd a night,
Fade now wide ſcatter'd, and let in the light.

He ſaid; and caſts the coin before them wide; 25
But they his ſorrow and his tears deride.
Hence the unhappy, blind with fury, goes,
And more he thinks, the more augment his woes.
His heart corrodes to pining grief a prey;
Nor he the Ether's convex dares ſurvey. 30
Then throwing round his baleful eyes, he cried,
How ſhall unhappy I, alas! decide?
Shall ages, hid in the deep womb of time,
Forget to tell the horror of my crime?
Shall I go ſuppliant, and my fault declare?— 35
But's not in mercy ſuch a ſin to ſpare—
Yet how addreſs, if to behold afraid,
Whom innocent and harmleſs I betray'd?
Then ſhall I go, as far as will can fly,
And live, unknown, beneath another ſky. 40
Snatch me ye rapid whirl-winds from this coaſt,
Where fading day (its round complete) is loſt.
What place is ſafe? the Godhead's ev'ry-where,
And with his thunders ſhakes this terrene ſphere.

Still ſhall my guilty mind and cares attend,
Whether I traverſe earth, or ſhips aſcend.
Yet when, and where ?— but I in vain delay,
And on my mind let airy viſions play.
Then earth yawn wide; receive within thy womb
A wretch who ſeeks to hide him in thy gloom.
Poor Judas, ah ! thy crimes bring on theſe woes,
Which you, in ſeaſon, might their peſt oppoſe.
Let thy ſpontaneous hand revenge thy deed,
And, ſhuning man and day, ignobly bleed.

Thus he exclaim'd ; reſolv'd to find relief,
By drowning in his blood his mighty grief ;
Raſhly ſuppoſing, by theſe deſp'rate means,
His toil to finiſh, and corroſive pains.
And now he thinks the earth for him tranſpires,
Or himſelf wrap'd with Heav'n's conſuming fires.
So ſtrongly fancy bids the Pris'ner riſe,
In vivid paint, to his bewilder'd eyes.
His eyes with blood ſuffus'd, his face with gloom,
And trembling limbs announce impending doom.
Now darkneſs round him caſts her ebon ſhade,
And to his viſual orbs all nature fades.
Mad wretch who dares not his tranſgreſſion own,
And call down pardon from the heav'nly throne ;
But thinks no vows can move the ſupreme Sire,
Nor weeping penance quench his kindled ire,
But obſtinately bad, and fix'd on fate,
He goes, and ſeeks a foreſt's deep retreat ;
Which, near the royal palace, wildly waves
A verdant tinctur'd waſte of panting leaves.

There trembling heſitates, in horrid ſtrife,
By what deſtructive means to pour his life;
The mazes of his ſoul or to pervade,
And crimſon in his breaſt the pointed blade:
Or headlong from a mountain's brow to fly,
And transfix'd on the ſubject rocks to die.
But the drear furies, his attendant train,
Soon guide the wretch ſeiz'd with the love of pain,
To his laſt ſcene, where quickly they entwine
A length of ſpreading boughs, which low recline;
About his fractur'd neck they bind the wreath,
Which ſtops the pores that give the ſoul to breathe.
Rewarded thus, his entrails burſt their way,
And ſoon the with'ring body blots the day.

The new-born day ſcarce bluſh'd in ether's ſpace,
When near the palace ruſh the prieſtly race;
The porches ſwell diſtended with the crowd,
And with vociferous tumults ecchoe loud.
Nor is it lawful (ſo by cuſtom led)
On ſacred days the profane court to tread.
At length the Roman comes, with youths embrac'd,
With flowing robes of purple proudly grac'd;
Mounts at the gate his iv'ry throne ſublime,
While nod the faſces of his native clime:
Each Father then his ſeat in order takes;
Silence enſues; and thus the Roman ſpeaks:

Declare at length, the monſtrous crime relate,
That ſhould condemn the lovely youth to fate.
After ſtrict ſearch into his life and birth,
We could diſcover nought, that merits death;
But rather found, his won'drous deeds, the theme, 105
That burniſh'd bright the plumes of joyful fame.
The Priſoner ſince I ſaw, and heard his phraſe;
The ſight, how melting! how divine the lays!
His viſage, eyes, and language, all combine
To own him God, at leaſt of race divine. 110
To him, therefore, your tribute-homage bring,
Nor, ignorantly proud, diſown your King.

He ſaid; their lurking grief the Hebrews own,
By raging murmurs and a gen'ral groan.
Then fam'd for years, and ſweet perſuaſive tongue, 115
In the midſt roſe Annas, and thus begun:

Roman, if ev'ry other proof ſhould fail,
The Pris'ner's guilty conduct to reveal;
This great aſſemblage of the city, led
To ſee his perſon reckon'd with the dead, 120
At leaſt might move thee, Leader, to proceed,
If no one elſe, to have the crim'nal bleed.
For this ſeducer, with an artful tongue,
Tip'd with fine words, has multitudes undone:
And wears, deceitful, virtue's honeſt face, 125
While in his heart vice holds the fondeſt place.

Seeſt not, what can his new religion mean,
His orgies, nightly councils, that convene?
Thro' Juda's towns, he lights ſedition's flame,
And dares the empire of this great world claim;
Boaſts God his Sire, who rules the ſtarry vault,
And like the God abſolves who owns his fault;
Withdraws the fear of vengeance after fate;
Which crime, the laws ordain, with death to treat.
But from our ancient cuſtoms he refrains,
While his falſe fram'd Godhead new laws ordains;
New rites and offerings dares in towns proclaim;
And lateſt ages ſhall obſerve the ſame.
Ev'n loudly threats, oh direful guilt! to ſpurn
Our ſacred altars, and our temple burn.
A temple by our fathers rear'd in air,
A coſtly ſtructure of laborious care;
Will ſhortly quench the ſun with ebon dyes,
And charm the ſtars from the inchanted ſkies.
Nor long his breaſt his vices latent bears;
For to nefarious roofs he oft repairs,
Tho' interdicted, there aſſumes a ſeat,
While his vile band indulge the genial feaſt.
Is there thro' all the town a wretch profane,
The greateſt ruffian, of a ruffian-train;
With reſtleſs joy, to him he ſwiftly tends,
Nor ceaſe his viſits, 'till they commence friends.
The love of vice appears to him ſo fair:
And of his heart deceit holds ſuch a ſhare.—
On feſtive days alſo when labours ceaſe,
The ſick he viſits, and expells diſeaſe.

How his Diſciples roam, ſhall I relate,
And live, unpuniſh'd, on illicit meat:
By law unwarranted, and with fingers foul
The ſtain'd bread handle, and inhale the bowl:
Shall for his ſake the Sire ſupreme withdraw
His holy rites and long-exiſting law?
Or in his mind can new reſolves ariſe,
And fickle change reign in the conſtant ſkies?
Give him to death, leſt, with his menac'd blow,
Our incens'd altars he ſhould overthrow.
Give him to death, that none in future times
Shall dare eſſay to perpetrate ſuch crimes.
Let him in pain, due to his vice, expire;
And thus preſerve our ſhrines from profane fire.

He ſaid; the throng roar out the ſame demands;
But with their cries unmov'd the Roman ſtands.
Nor is the charge, againſt the Pris'ner, new,
A work by hate compil'd, the Leader knew.
For Chriſt's bright actions rous'd the Hebrews' ire,
And ſet their ſacrilegious ſouls on fire.
Fame ſays, you charg'd him in theſe crimes, he cry'd,
And he, with reaſon ſtrong, the charge deny'd.
Nor fears Jehovah's Son himſelf to own,
Who ſhould, by promiſe, leave the Heav'n's bright throne;
To help weak mortals, his Sire's wrath appeaſe,
And reconcile him to the Hebrew-race,

With his own pow'r to pay the parents faults,
So records tell, and ſo your fathers taught.
For he, to prove the truth, through towns proceeds,
And the whole coaſts gaze at his wond'rous deeds,
Which lie beyond the reach of human art,
Nor mortal genius can the ſkill impart.
Many he call'd to drink the ſolar beam,
When death, pervading quite the human frame,
Diſſolv'd the ſprings, that granted life to roll,
And loos'd the body's commerce with the ſoul.
Ye wretched mortals, then, your hate ſuppreſs,
Ceaſe your vain conteſts, and your God confeſs.

When he had ſaid, more fierce their fury glows,
More loud they urge their ſuit, and tear their cloaths.
Not leſs impetuouſly their anger raves,
Than when broad Atevis or Padus' waves,
(The meadows fattening where their ſurges flow,
While ſmiles the ſurface with a verdant glow)
Are by ſome peaſant, on a ſudden, bound
Within ſtrict limits by a riſing mound;
The river ſwells more angry by delay,
The barrier breaks and victor rolls away.

Herod the King, and of a regal line,
Was then in town to ſhare the rites divine:
For he part of his paternal realm ſway'd,
And by Rome's bounty Galilee obey'd.

Of whoſe arrival, when the Roman heard,
From his ingrateful office to be freed; 210
The Galilean bound he ſends, and prays
The Galilean Chief with care to trace
The captive's crime, and with matureſt thought
To deal a vengeance equal to the fault.
Chriſt's name announc'd, joys in the Monarch wake, 215
To ſee the Pris'ner and to hear him ſpeak.
Soon to the royal ſight he ſtood confeſs'd,
Whom ſoon the King with various themes addreſs'd;
But to no theme he deign'd the leaſt reply:
Nor from the lofty heav'ns caſt down an eye. 220
Herod, admiring but a mortal born,
Reſtor'd him to the Pretor-bands with ſcorn:
And thus diſmiſs'd, tho' blameleſs, yet diſgrac'd,
Returns to Pontius, with his charge diſpleas'd.

My fainting mind ſubſides, my ſenſes fail 225
The treats of God's true offspring to detail:
Himſelf a God veil'd with a human frame,
And of the ſkies the architect ſupreme,
Whom neither ocean, earth, nor air's pure ſpace,
Nor the bright tracts of ether can embrace. 230
All-potent Ghost, my drooping ſoul pervade:
Quit, Ghoſt, the ſky, and with thy God-head aid,
To paint this ſcene, as oft as I eſſay,
O'er-caſt with ebon tints all things decay:
The ſun no more with rays the world bedews, 235
But ſad-diſcolour'd fade his roſy hues;

While ſparkling ſtars are quench'd in ſable dyes,
And pitying drops fall from the penſive ſkies.
Offspring of God, of heav'n the light ſerene,
Thyſelf a God, ſent from Olympus' plain,
Can our diſtreſs ſuch pitying love excite
To ſuffer pain, to make our pain more light;
Suſtain a load of evils not thy own,
And with the vengeance due to evils groan:
Oh ſad reward! for pitying much our ſtate
To blot our crimes, with thy ſpontaneous fate.
We cull'd the fruit of the forbidden tree:
Nail'd to the trunk, you bear the penal fee.
You, tho' a God, and God's undoubted ſeed,
Now bear the pains by mortal pow'r decreed,
Before a judgment-bench, ſtand chain'd with awe,
Who ſhall the world judge with your ſupreme law.

The youth return'd in chains when Pontius ſaw,
Nor from the throne he can himſelf withdraw:
Toſt in a ſea of cares, and doubtful ſtrife,
He tries each means to ſave a Captive's life;
Now wears a ſuppliant, now a haughty air,
To move their minds, and hearts, untaught to ſpare:—
But vain his threats, vain are his gentle lays,
The more he ſoothes, the more their furies blaze.
At length, he cries; the days their luſtre ſhed
When we (by your vain fathers' cuſtom led)
Among the numbers in your gaols confin'd,
May one diſmiſs, and his ſad chains unbind:

Do you conſent, that I this Pris'ner free ?
The blameleſs ought enjoy their liberty.
In you at large a feroce nature reigns,
While he already felt a ſtore of pains ;
I'll free him then, or take him hence and ſlay,
Againſt my will, to death a ſpotleſs prey.

His ſpeech is broken by the cohort-crowd
Who forge new crimes and cry for vengeance loud.
About this time, the Priſon's gloomy round
Eccho'd with Barabbas, in fetters bound ;
Long time he waited death's eternal night,
No ſafety dawning, as no hopes for flight ;
Than whom, none was more baſe in ev'ry crime,
Deteſted by his Chiefs, and native clime.
The Roman aſks, their anger to appeaſe,
Whether this wretch or Chriſt he ſhould releaſe ?
With fury blind, and monſtrous in their choice,
For Barabbas they beg with ſuppliant voice :
While ſtrenuouſly they urge Chriſt's direful fate,
And with their pow'r the Rector's care fruſtrate.

The ſcourge and rods (to weep who can forbear ?)
Chriſt's ſacred frame by Pilate's order tear.
To quench their thirſt of blood, by ſuch vile arts,
Betrays, cries he, their unrelenting hearts ;
Perhaps the proſpect of his mangled mien
Their glutted minds from gore and death will wean.

Now blood from his disfigur'd body flows,
His limbs are tabid, and his neck with blows.
Fleſh from his arms and neck in pieces bounds
While his bare ſides glare with the laſhes' wounds.
From his red lips ſpouts thick a ſanguine ſtream,
His naked ſhoulders own the flagrant ſhame;
His naked breaſt with black contuſion ſwells,
And from his knees to feet a crimſon wells.
In gore thus weltring, (drap'ry veil'd his waſte)
He ſhews his figure bare with wounds diſgrac'd.
Heav'n low'rs, the moon conceals her blunted light
Beneath the earth, and flies the bloody ſight.
The ſtars, that us'd their twinkling orbs to roll,
Struck with amaze, now ſeem'd to ſhoot the pole.
Such various means to fail too ſadly prove,
How hard's the taſk the Hebrews' hearts to move:
For bending vows can't calm their boiſt'rous ire,
Nor this blood-ſcene ſubdue their blood's deſire.
But all catch fury from each other's breath
And low'ring urge the harmleſs ſuff'rer's death.
Now the court's vault is wounded with their cries,
And from profoundeſt hell the Furies riſe;
Theſe ſhapeleſs phantoms hov'ring o'er the crowd,
New point their rage and them with darkneſs ſhroud.

Mean time the Roman's bride, with dreams half-dead,
Forbids her ſpouſe the young man's blood to ſhed.
The portents of the Gods appear to threat
Th' hands polluted with the Pris'ner's fate.

The youth's the ſnowy lamb that roſe to view:
She cries, (for all my dreams are colour'd true)
Whoſe mangled body barking dogs ſurround,
And ſhepherd-throngs with ruſtic weapons wound.
His cruel death ſoon all the paſtures wail,
Each noted foreſt and ſequeſter'd vale.
The Thund'rer now his vengeance ſet on fire,
Again the murd'rers hurls from high his ire.
The heav'ns in pangs ruſh down on ev'ry ſide,
And hail beats on the woods and country wide.
Then ſoon this voice glides on the ſtreams of air,
Cruſh mortal rage: The God, O Roman, ſpare.
I think this Youth (to you the marks muſt ſhine)
Derives his birth from a celeſtial line.
To doom him then to death, my Lord, abſtain,
Nor with his ſacred blood your hands prophane.
May the mild Gods theſe omens from us chace,
Attend the Jews alone, and threat their race.

The viſion heard, the Roman fiercer glows,
Reſolv'd the Hebrews' fury to oppoſe.
Now threat'ning acts, and with contracted brows
Bids them repeat, elſewhere, their cruel vows.
Now ſeems intent the Pris'ner's chains to looſe,
And from his ſtore of cares himſelf ſubduce.

The gloomy Chief of Erebus' dark ſtate,
(His breaſt corroded with eternal hate)
Views Pilate's ſcheme with a ſad heaving ſigh,
And his own plots 'gainſt Chriſt abortive lie.

Without delay, he ſummons to his aid
The ghaſtly monſter, FEAR, from his drear ſhade;
Than whom no greater peſt all hell confines,
The foe profeſs'd to human bold deſigns:
He brings pale coldneſs, ever of his train,
And ſloth, ſlow-moving with dejected mien.
The Tyrant bids the monſter thence repair,
And wing his flight to day's ſupernal air.
Where, her wild hills Phœnicia ſoft elates
And enter Solyma's extenſive gates:
To bend the Latian's mind with humbling views,
And, to deter him, his deſign offuſe.
He ſoon obeys; the ſooty wings aſſumes
Of nightly birds, and veſts his limbs in plumes.
The obſcene bird arriv'd, before the eyes
Of purpled Pilate, importune oft flies;
With dreadful howls, now frequent round him rings,
Now beats his breaſt, and now his face with wings.
His heart is chill'd; his eyes with wildneſs ſtare,
His face grows pallid, and erect his hair;
Cold damps of horror thro' his body ſteal;
His knees ſink languid, and his accents fail.
When thus diſtreſs'd, ſoon as the crowd had ſeen
His faded cheeks, and his diſtorted mien;
Without delay, they ſeize the preſent hour,
And their addreſs thus with wild clamours pour:
Your captive dares of King affect the name,
The ſceptre wield, and regal honours claim.
If ſuch offences are not big with doom,
Soon ſhall ſeditious towns revolt from Rome.

All Syria ſoon ſhall by his arts withdraw
A due ſubmiſſion to the Roman law.
If CÆSAR then, or Rome demand your care,
Forbid the peſt to breathe this vital air ;
Due to his many crimes, the vengeance ſhed,
Leſt the contagion thro' the land ſhould ſpread.

While with the ſtubborn Jews the roofs thus ring,
The Roman trembles at the name of King,
The monſter Fear prevailing in his breaſt,
Conquer'd at length he yields to their requeſt ;
His pow'r too weak their anger to aſſwage,
Becomes a ſlave to their vindictive rage.
So when the wind along the ocean roars,
Againſt a ſhip that ſails with lab'ring oars ;
The pilot ſtruggles, at the ſtern plac'd high,
And ſhouts his men the fervent oars to ply :
But when his views each element combin'd
His courſe to hinder, with the ſtormy wind ;
Slack work the oars, his ſeat the pilot leaves,
And gives the ſhip a prey to winds and waves.
I own your conqueſt : He then ſurly cry'd
Since your baſe cruelty will not ſubſide,
I ſhall no longer your requeſt deny,
Condemn'd for feign'd offences let him die.
With ſorrow pregnant, and without delay,
I hope a fatal forfeit you ſhall pay,
Pains pour on you and on your race's head
Due to the captive's blood unjuſtly ſhed.

He ſaid, and bids the waiters quickly bring
A bowl crown'd with the current of a ſpring;
And, while he laves his hands, he pours this ſtrain:
As I thus purify my hands from ſtain,
So I diſclaim this blood unjuſtly ſpilt
And purge myſelf free of the bloody guilt;
When he had ſaid, the judgment-throne deſcends,
And to his inmoſt palace ſwiftly tends.

The Hebrews thus: Let God, if pains are due,
Shed them on us, and on our race renew.

While in the porch before the palace-gate
Before the crowd this caſe was in debate:
The Leader's band within the ſpacious court
With the mute Pris'ner barbarouſly ſport.
As cities hail'd him King, he's now diſgrac'd
With the mock-purple, and ſublimely plac'd.
For the bright diadem, and crinal gold,
His bleeding temples pointed thorns infold:
And for the ſceptre, which proud Monarchs wield,
They offer to his hands a river-reed.
The gates wide op'd, with glad applauſe they bring,
And, in the public view, ſalute him King.
Thus in their ſports the little boys ſelect
One of their comrades. and their King elect:
Round their proud Monarch throng the ſmiling bands,
And with glad ſhouts perform his mock commands.

So in the hall the menial crew reſort,
And pleas'd indulge themſelves in this baſe ſport.
For with a veil they overcaſt his ſight,
And with their hands and reeds his viſage ſmite.
Some pluck his beard, concreted with his blood;
Some from their filthy mouths emit a flood
Of ſalive moiſture in his ſacred face;
While ſome his beauteous frame with duſt diſgrace.
All buſy on him heap a ſtore of pains;
Nor of the vile diſhonour he complains.
A cruel vigil theſe barbarians keep,
Nor let his weary eye-lids cloſe in ſleep.
Oh heavy grief! how ſhocking to be ſeen
Appears his mangled and inglorious mien!
To birds a reſting-place woods give their leaves,
And mountains to the ſavage-kind their caves,
An hoſpitable roof to reſt at night,
And teeming bring their brute offspring to light.
But to Creation's Sire, whoſe mighty ſway,
The blazing manſions of the ſky obey,
All earth denies a ſpot, to reſt his head,
And his exhauſted limbs in death to ſpread.

And now the Victor-Jews, among the ſtore
Of direful pangs, the moſt acute explore.
That death, attended with his tort'ring train,
May on the Pris'ner ruſh with ſharper pain,

To ſpread and nail him on a fatal tree,
And by ſlow pangs life waſte, the crowd agree;
Of the ſharp ax, the wood repeats each ſtroke,
And ſoon falls ruſhing down the ſtately oak. 460
A Croſs is rear'd, of the cleft timber built,
A torture fram'd, to puniſh heavy guilt.
Kings once this machine us'd, by loit'ring pain,
The condemn'd wretches' dying lives to drain.
Nor did this inſtrument of horrid fame 465
A ſpark of glory then or honour claim:
But, ſince nail'd on the wood the Godhead lay,
A ſuppliant rev'rence to the Croſs we pay:
Rear'd on our ſacred altars we behold
The tree inwrought with ſilver and with gold. 470
And the glad honours we to it decree
Relate to him, whoſe death has bleſs'd the tree.
The Croſs ſhall, like a lamp, hang in the ſkies,
And tinge the world with its refulgent dyes;
When the laſt day all creatures ſhall entomb, 475
And a broad blaze all nature's works conſume.

Earth ſcarce was cheriſh'd with the morning's hue,
When the town pours her youth the ſcene to view.
With tides of ruſhing crowds the ways o'erflow,
And with wild tumult all things fervent glow. 480
Now ſpoil'd of his mock purple robe of ſtate,
They ſhouting drag the Pris'ner to his fate:
Fetter'd amid the crowd, he's trembling led,
Gaſh'd with nocturnal wounds and almoſt dead:

On his weak ſhoulders bears the Croſs's beam;
(A knotted oak compos'd the fatal frame)
On which transfix'd, he leaves this nether air,
And by his death compleats his dol'rous care.
Around him throng a band in denſe array,
Whoſe arms, and ſhields, and ſpears flaſh on the day;
Whoſe helmets glow with crimſon plumage crown'd,
And brazen trumps in varied clangors ſound.
On foot ſome follow, ſome on lofty ſteeds,
Whoſe barb'rous ſhouts each neighb'ring hill far ſpeeds.
Still many weep, whom rectitude enflames;
But chiefly tender maids and pious dames;
To ſee him climb the rough rock's airy height,
And 'gainſt the ſtones oft wound his naked feet.
While up the mount he drags the pond'rous oak,
Cries to his mourners with a penſive look,
Ye hoary Dames, tho' woes unjuſt I bear,
Yet ceaſe for me t'indulge the pious tear;
To your impending pains your tears are due,
And to the wrath that ſhall your race purſue.
Thus having ſaid, and, moving to his fate,
He leaves with tott'ring ſteps the city's gate.

Mean while to be ſpectator of the ſtrife,
And view his Son exhale his mortal life;
The Monarch of the ſky aſpires ſublime
To the moſt high tow'r of his heavenly clime.

Beſet with troops of the Celeſtials bright,
The plumy hoſt of Heav'n attend his flight.
On mount Olympus, lucid to behold,
A temple ſtands of gems and ſolid gold.
A mighty fabrick, the ſupreme Sire's ſeat,
Which views the ſubject ſtars this world luſtrate.
An adamantine cliff rears ſlowly fine,
In the mid, its head, like a taper'd pine.
On either ſide the cliff, above the ſkies,
Nine thrones arrang'd in various order riſe.
Hither repair Olympus' native throng,
And round their King break forth in pomp of ſong.
Then on their thrones reclin'd, the ſparkling mound,
The thrice three choirs in myſtic form ſurround.
For each's content, tho' different is their care;
Their pow'r unlike, yet happy in their ſhare.
For, as with greater merit beams their mind,
So they more high are awfully enſhrin'd.
Thron'd in the midſt, the potent Father ſways,
And all creation with a glance ſurveys.
His lucid form diffuſes floods of blaze,
And all things glow with his wide flaſhing rays.
At length on Juda's land he drops his eyes,
Where the mount's brows with direful aſpect riſe.
The choirs view ſad the mountain from their thrones,
Which on the town turns pale with human bones;
Where on offenders fatal pains attend,
And parch'd on trees, where livid corpſe ſuſpend.

Hither ſoon as our penſive Hero came,
Saw the ſad tortures and the fatal beam;
Around the hill his mournful eye he throws,
If he could find his friends among his foes:
But none could luſtrate, but an hoſtile band,
Whoſe weapons flaſh a ſplendor o'er the land.
For all his friends, whom once he held ſo dear,
Now fly him in diſtreſs, diſpers'd thro' fear.
So when the light'nings round ſome ſhepherd play,
Or in a vale he's kill'd by beaſt of prey;
Soon roam his ſheep, affrighted with his fate,
And o'er the paſtures wide their ſorrow bleat.

And now he mounts the Croſs, and hangs in air;
Now ſeems his Godhead to forget, and fears
This bitter kind of death; now anxious roll
His drear diſaſters in his fainting ſoul;
Sorrow ſo fills his mind, that ev'ry pore
Emits ſweat-drops deep ting'd with ſable gore.
He now remembers oft his native ſkies,
And, Ether viewing, thus breaks forth in ſighs.
Why leave me, Mighty FATHER, in my woes?
Where's fled the love, a Sire his offspring owes?

The ſad addreſs the potent parent hears,
The ſad addreſs ſtrikes deep the Angels' ears.
The cauſe in his deep breaſt revolves the God,
And finds the ſcene is acted by his nod;
The horrid pomp of tortures views ſerene,
And ſtills himſelf enflam'd with his Son's pain.

But pow'r can't check the paſſions that ariſe
In th'ambient crowd, wing'd natives of the ſkies.
The ſight thro' all a ſudden grief diſtills,
And indignation ev'ry breaſt now fills.
And now reſolv'd their Monarch's Son to aid,
And ſtop the murder with the vengeful blade ;
An Angel, not the laſt of the plum'd choir,
Than whom none can more loud the trump inſpire,
To the high pole with ſwift aſcent now bounds,
And in the roſy ſkies war's ſignals ſounds :
Olympus ecchoes thro' his cryſtal ſtate,
And with unuſual gleams the ſtars vibrate.
If any Angel roams the lunar ſphere,
The clangors ſoon aſſault his remote ear :
The brazen voice floats on the current wind,
And wounds the guardian ſpirits of mankind :
While earth, thro' all her broad expanded plains,
Thrills with the valleys of the trumpet's ſtrains.
Soon as the clangors reach the Angel hoſts,
By ether's Monarch ſent to various coaſts,
They leave their charge imperfect, and repair
Above the polar heights thro' tracts of air.
And as the doves forſake their airy dome,
And love thro' meads, in ſearch of food, to roam,
Should a loud tempeſt on a ſudden riſe,
And with expanſive clouds ſuffuſe the ſkies,
On flutt'ring wings they ſoon ſublime aſpire,
And to their manſions from the fields retire.

Soon from Olympus' brow all glaring wheel, 595
And Heav'n fades horrid, with the flaſhing ſteel.
Arms and chariots return a brazen ſound,
And groaning wheels the ſtarry pavement wound:
Each pole the dreadful hurricane admires,
Ether's convulſive orbs, and flaſhing fires. 600
Tho' without body live theſe finer ſhades,
Whoſe purer natures to our ſenſes fade;
Yet ſtill, whether to mortal climes conſign'd,
Or war, as once, againſt their rebel-kind;
Each can aſſume a form of coarſer mould, 605
And their aerial limbs with wings infold.
In fictious bodies thus the Spirits dreſt,
Full to the viſual organ ſtand confeſs'd.
Now the celeſtials, in a circling flight,
Convene; their bodies ruſhing on the fight: 610
Long uſeleſs arms from Heav'n's braſs-columns ſeize,
Throwing about their forms a lambent blaze.
Celeſtial ſpoils, and wars victorious boaſt,
Gain'd o'er their brothers a defeated hoſt.
Now a javelin this holy Angel bears, 615
While this with ardor points the oaken ſpears.
Some graſp an arrow, ſome with fire-brands glow;
And o'er their ſhoulders caſt the lunar bow.
Others a ſtore of limpid whirl-bats hold,
And ſlings of temper'd tongs their hands infold; 620
While on their thighs ſuſtain the plumy hoſt,
The burniſh'd ſteel, in iv'ry ſheaths inclos'd.

Some guide the chariots thro' the blue ſerene,
The reſt on painted wings their frames ſuſtain.
Tho' wings to all the Angel choirs belong,
Unequal is the ſwiftneſs of the throng:
With fluttering pinions ſome each ſhoulder veil,
And with their plumage 'long the ether ſail.
Some veſt their feet with three-fold wings, and rear
Their ſoaring bodies to the Heav'nly air.
Their various flights with various looks are ſeen
So grac'd with diff'rent faces is their mien.
Nor is the painting of their plumes the ſame;
Some wreathe their feet with wings of roſy flame:
While from their ſhoulders flaſhing pinions riſe,
That emulate the luſtre of the ſkies:
Thoſe ſpread their plumage ſplendent to the view,
Sheding the verdure of the em'rald's hue.
Theſe bathe their gloſſy backs with ſaffron rays:
While hundreds in the pride of colours blaze.
So when the ſummer leaves the ſultry ſphere,
And beauteous autumn rules the fruitful year,
The trees improve the luſtre of the ſkies,
Bending with fruit bedrop'd with various dyes.

And now the hoſt glide thro' the cryſtal ſpace,
And, on their wings incumbent, Heav'n embrace.
So many mortals, ſince creation's birth,
Ne'er trod at once the ſurface of the earth.

In thrice three myriads riſe the gen'ral band,
And thrice three chiefs the num'rous hoſt command. 650
On Garganus' high brow, above the reſt,
In weapons fam'd, a Leader ſhines confeſs'd:
The ſame, whom once the battles' glorious toils
Sublimely rais'd, crown'd with victorious ſpoils:
He ſtalks triumphant 'mid the chiefs of fight, 655
With helmet, creſt, and gems ſuperbly bright.
The dragon's tawny hide he now diſplays,
A ſpoil, whoſe ſpires emit a horrid blaze.
The ſpear transfix'd the monſter to the ground,
And his preſs'd back receives the mortal wound. 660
Wide blaze his arms; his ſhield with radiance gleams;
And a bright jaſper ſets his ſword in flames.

Come to the flaming portals of the ſkies
With keener wrath the warrior ſpirits riſe.
Their ſouls catch ardor from the glorious ſight, 665
The famous enſigns of the former fight;
From lofty tow'rs they view the pendent cars,
On poſts hang arms, and darts, and ſhields of wars,
Trophies, weapons, from the rebel ſpirit-train,
Who dar'd with ſinful thoughts the ſkies prophane, 670
Reſolv'd Olympus with their nods to ſhake
Elate with impotence, and ſuperbly weak;
But to the hoſt of purer minds they yield,
And, vanquiſh'd, leave the ſkies diſputed field.

For by the ſculptor's hand the gates unfold
The dreadful war engrav'd on poliſhed gold.
In the pure ſpace of the factitious air,
Each adverſe hoſt in act of fight appear.
Now here, now there, a band of wand'rers fly
And with their wings obſcure the middle ſky.
With blazing weapons now the troops engage:
Now war's confuſion kindles into rage.
Some, wanting arms, ſeize by their locks the foe,
And whirling round thro' the blue ether throw.
At length urg'd ardent by the happy choir,
The rebel hoſt with ſullen ſteps retire,
Now chas'd thro' heav'n, they fly with horror pale,
Swift as the rolling clouds, or whiſtling gale;
For the all-potent Sire ſeems, with his hand,
To dart his thunder 'gainſt the routed band;
Who urg'd with flames, and from Olympus hurl'd,
At once plunge deep into hell's gloomy world.
With former ſpoils and figur'd fight elate,
They glow to ruſh thro' ether's lofty gate.
Then down to earth had ſhot the Angel hoſt,
And ſcatter'd flames along the guilty coaſt:
Thy towns, Judea, had, already, lay,
For thy miſdeeds, to vengeful fire a prey,
Had not the Thund'rer from his ſtarry tow'rs,
(Rous'd with the tumult of the heavenly pow'rs)
The ill-tim'd battle check'd and raſh eſſay,
With mandates harſh, and painful to obey;

For mid the minſtrels of the plumy bands,
Who act in virgin forms, the heav'n's commands,
Fair CLEMENCY of placid looks he ſpies,
And to the choſen Angel thus he cries:

Go, wing your chariot thro' the cryſtal ſphere,
And to your brothers thus my dictates bear:
To them belong neither the lore of Heav'n,
Nor the vaſt empire of the world was giv'n,
That they ſhou'd dare both ſkies and earth confound,
And flame the mind, with war's deſtructive ſound;
Let them appeas'd their bold deſign forbear,
Lay down their arms, and hither ſwift repair.

He ſaid: her chariot thro' Olympus rolls,
And ſhe God's ire diffuſes to the poles;
Unleſs the hoſt return, from weapons ceaſe,
And their tumultuous minds ſubſide in peace.
Fair HOPE and FAITH, on her attendant, rove,
And the mild parent of religious love,
With golden PEACE and PIETY join the band,
The candid olive noding in each hand.
Where'er they bend, the ſky with weapons ſhines,
The hoſt grow mild, and ceaſe from their deſigns:
And now unarm'd, Olympus' martial band,
Before Jehovah's royal preſence ſtand;
Obedient to his word, each takes his ſeat,
According to his rank, and reſts ſedate.

His eyes around the Thund'rer-father throws,
His head thrice nods, that bright with glory glows; 730
And thrice the poles with ſounds terrific ſhake;
When thus his words the awful ſilence break:

Why let your rage againſt my pleaſure ſtray,
Ah whither ruſh ye mad Celeſtials ſay?
On my aſſiſtance can't my Son rely, 735
Or is my pow'r grown weaker in the ſky?
Then calm your minds, and lay aſide your cares,
Theſe ills, my Son, with my permiſſion, bears.
For know, man's crimes are blotted by his fate,
Thus heav'n, by our decree, unfolds its gate. 740
Therefore he lives on earth by labours worn,
The firſt in woes, poor, wretched, and forlorn.
This day, big with his pain, ſhall view him ſpread
A willing bleeding victim, mid the dead.
Now willing horrors thro' his art'ries roll, 745
And death in proſpect quite unmans his ſoul.
As if aſide he had his God-head laid,
The armleſs mortal feels the painful blade.
For 'gainſt his part divine mankind might low'r
In vain, and mortal weapons loſe their pow'r. 750
If ſo my will, my virtue's not ſo ſmall,
But I might ſave my Son in death to fall.
In vain all men might 'gainſt him riſe with rage,
That ever liv'd, or dy'd in any age.
My ſtrength felt Babel, when her giants ſtrove, 755
By edifice, to ſeize my realms above:

So ſtrong, they could the lofty mountains tear
From their foundations, and whirl them in air.
Struck with my thunder ſtill the ſtructures fume,
And the drear ruins ſerve them for a tomb :
Now reſt the hoſt of ſtorms to nothing hurl'd,
Who cou'd unhinge the fabrick of this world.
I ſhock'd the earth and ether's blue profound,
And all creation with the deluge drown'd.
The human race have ſeen my raging ire,
Now arm'd with thunder, and now clad with fire.
Thro' rocking orbs I oft in tempeſts roar'd,
And mow'd down armies with the vengeful ſword.
But wait ; a day ſhall ſoon in ether reign
When that vile town ſhall wiſh, but wiſh in vain,
It ne'er had touch'd him, who can glorious trace
His origin divine from heav'n's high ſpace.

This ſaid, the trembling world feels deep his nod,
And ether's fanes ſhake with the thund'ring God.
Their wrath and rage without delay retire,
And votive friendſhip melts the gen'ral choir :
So on the ſurface of a level'd plain,
In mimic fight, contend a youthful train :
A circled band of youths with wonder gaze
On the warm ſtruggle for the voice of praiſe.
If one for toil unfit ſhou'd fearful yield,
Or if, by caſual cadence, preſs the field :
Each true comrade the dire misfortune views,
To aid how willing !—but their laws refuſe.

Around the fallen youth all ſtand aghaſt,
And with dire curſes the diſaſter blaſt.
Without aſſiſtance thus the Hero ſtands,
On ev'ry ſide beſet with ruffian bands;
And now the clam'rous crew, by furies led,
On a large tree his naked body ſpread.
Stretch'd to each margin of the tranſverſe beam,
His hands by ſteel transfix'd with crimſon ſtream.
His guſhing feet the ſame ſharp weapons bore;
While the croſs bluſhes with the copious gore.
All call forth their ſtrength; with blows groans the oak,
And the ſupine hill ecchoes with each ſtroke.
Words, o'er his head, in diff'rent tongues, relate
His country, name, and cauſe of his dire fate.
Then, one on either hand, two croſſes rear
Two ſocial ſuff'rers, hanging in the air;
Whom for their crimes the rig'rous laws reſign
To awful equity and pains condign.
HIM, in the mid, a loftier croſs ſublimes,
As if the firſt in baſeneſs and in crimes.
Unhappy Solyma, unhappy ſeat,
Rear'd on the faithleſs plains of Juda's ſtate;
To men of pious mind thou direful bane,
And even treach'rous to the Prophet-train.
Is this the ſeat, is this the royal bed,
And this the feaſt for ether's King you ſpread?
Such honours and aſſociates you prepare
For him, who left for man the lucid ſphere;

Who dwelt ſpontaneous on the globe terrene,
Beneath the image of a human mien.
Who led from Egypt's coaſt your harmleſs race, 815
Thro' the wild realms of the briny ſpace;
Bade the rough ſurge to a ſmooth way ſubſide,
And ſtop'd the progreſs of the headlong tide:
Who, with your labours touch'd, thro' dreary waſtes
From high Olympus ſhed celeſtial feaſts: 820
And, when the fonts to pour their torrents fail'd,
The rocks with guſhing rills your thirſt allay'd.
Your ſtate moſt lov'd of all he wou'd enthrone
Above the ſtars by merits all his own.
Are theſe the homage-gifts your patron ſhares, 825
And thus rewarded are his tender cares!
Can't Prophets' lays, nor wonders faith impart;
And with the preſent God glows not the heart?
What criminal ever felt ſuch dreadful woe,
And who prepar'd ſuch tortures for a foe? 830

Now hanging on the Croſs all ſilent wait,
To ſee ſome wonder in his hour of fate:
What hope can now the Victim entertain,
In what, confide deliv'rance from his pain?
But he long time unmov'd with torments hung, 835
Nor drop'd a plaintive accent from his tongue.
Nor from his looks yet fled each roſy grace:
Nor ceas'd his eyes to ſhed a ſacred blaze.

But blood and duſty ſweat his cheeks bedew,
And his teeth bluſh diſtain'd with ſanguine hue.
So Lucifer, bath'd in the azure waves,
The ſtarry firmament with luſtre laves.
Shou'd o'er the world's bright ſpace ariſe a cloud,
And the pale ether on a ſudden ſhroud;
His looks are beauteous, while his glories fade;
And his beams guſh tranſlucent thro' the ſhade.

Mean while, his Mother, led by vagrant fame,
With haſte, to the great city lately came.
But now ſhe hears her Son endures his fate,
(By treach'ry ſeiz'd) without the city-gate.
With the dire news, her looks grow ſadly pale,
And her ſtiff lips, to pour their accents, fail.
For tho' ſhe knew this ſcene receiv'd the nod
Of her Son's God-head, and his Father God:
Still o'er her mind ſuch floods of ſorrow flow,
That down ſhe ſinks a victim to her woe.
The houſe ſounds plaintive with her female train,
Who ſtrive to ſoothe her ſorrow ſhed in vain.
And now ſhe roams the town now here and there,
Seeking the fatal place with toilſome care:
Now ſtops, now gazes round, now opes her ear,
To view the tumult, or their clamours hear.
At eve, ſo, when the doe from fertile lawns,
Or mountain's brow, returns to her lov'd fawns,

Her tender care in their known haunts not found,
But ſtain'd with ſanguine drops the vicine ground,
Wildly ſhe throws about her prying eyes,
And thro' the foreſt roams with heaving ſighs.
If ſhe the raging lion's ſteps can trace,
Or mark the wolf's along the woody ſpace:
Thro' devious mazes ſhe inceſſant roves,
Marking with cloven feet the noding groves.
The Mother views the mount, which olives crown,
And which projects its ſhadows o'er the town;
Jav'lins and ſhields ruſh blazing on her eyes,
And copious hoſts of foot and horſemen riſe:
Thro' preſſing multitudes ſhe cuts her way,
And leaves the city-walls without delay:
Her flight the matrons from their porches ſee,
Or lofty windows, feel her miſery:
Now theſe, now others, ſhe outſtrips in ſpeed:
Tho often wounded by the running ſteed.
John with his mother, virgin Martha, came;
Her ſiſter, Salome, attends the dame;
Cleophas' weak ſpouſe joins the ſad parade,
Their temples ſhrouded with a ſable ſhade.

Now near the hill, ſhe views the ſtanding tree,
Ladders, and other ſigns of agony:
And, tho' their uſe was yet to her unknown,
Howe'er their ſight extunds a fearful groan.
Her hands thrice ſmite her gen'rous breaſt, and tear
The head's, fair ornament, her flowing hair.

Alas! within her mind ſhe thus debates,
What mean theſe tools, what ills this machine threats?
The raging Jews, I know, an odious foe,
Would on us ſhed, long ſince, unworthy woe.
This viſion, ſurely, hover'd o'er my head,
When I, one ſleepleſs night, compreſs'd my bed.
I thought the Jews, with a lamb's ritual gore,
Each man beſmear'd the threſhold of his door,
What time thro' labours and a long exile,
They ſtole, admoniſh'd, from the realms of Nile.

Thus having thought, ſhe goes without delay,
Burſting thro' condens'd troops and arms her way.
The troops each paſſage with their ſhields incloſe,
And her ſwift progreſs with their force oppoſe.
On the hill's brow, the knotted Croſs appears,
And the huge rough engine confirms her fears.
But when ſhe ſees her Son's tormenting ſtate,
Fix'd to the Croſs, convulſive with his fate;
His hands and feet pierc'd with the jav'lin's wound;
His temples with a bleeding chaplet crown'd;
Bedew'd with death's ſad drops, his languid eyes;
His beard and treſſes ſtain'd with ſanguine dyes;
Drop'd on one ſhoulder his dejected head;
And o'er his form death's pallid tincture ſpread;
The wretched Mother ſtiffens as the rock,
Which, on the Alps, contemns the tempeſt's ſhock;

The triple thunder's direful force defies,
And the perpetual deluge of the ſkies : 920
Hoary with froſt, it roughly ſtands ſublime,
And unchang'd triumphs o'er the wrecks of time.
Touch'd with her ſorrow each gazing mountain mourns,
And diſtant rivers pour their weeping urns :
The lofty cedars, on the mountain's brows 925
Diſtill their ſacred grief from bending boughs.

When from the tree the Son his Mother ſpy'd,
Her mental torments thro' his boſom glide:
But on her ſoon he reſts his dying ſight,
And from this loving glance reſults delight. 930
To ſoothe her mind oppreſt with her diſtreſs :
At length he pours this ſad and laſt addreſs.
I ſuffer'd mute, 'till now, without relief;
Nor, woman, be a prey to gnawing grief,
Since Heav'n's great Sire permits this group of pains 935
Who with his nod o'er boundleſs nature reigns.
Woman, this youth (for John ſtood weeping near)
Behold, hereafter, as your Son moſt dear;
Then ſoon to John his words he thus applies :
This Woman always view with filial eyes: 940
Guard her abandon'd ſtate, I dying ſue,
And pay the love, to a fond Mother due.

With wounded minds the foes lament his pains,
And the fierce hoſt grow ſoften'd with his ſtrains.

At length the Mother her ſad ſilence breaks,
While a deep groan her throbbing boſom ſhakes.
Lav'd with her ſorrow, ſhe the Croſs contains
Within her claſping arms, and thus complains:
My Son, of all creation's works the pride,
To your ſad Mother how your charms ſubſide!
Why can't my love forbid you undergo
The cruel agony of mortal woe,
For others' crimes the pangs of tortures feel,
And pierce my boſom with the bleeding ſteel?
But, ſay, is this your face, on which I gaze,
That once ſhone milder than the morning blaze?
Are your's theſe languid eyes?—Who dar'd prophane
Their ſhining ſluices with a fading ſtain?—
Ah! how from him chang'd, whom the youthful throng
Hail'd coming to the town, in feſtive ſong!
Whoſe way the choir with roſy chaplets ſtrow'd;
Beneath whoſe feet the purple carpets glow'd.
All own'd you King, and all a God confeſs'd:
Why are you with ſuch gems and purple dreſs'd?
An Angel me, with virgin tremors chill'd,
Once with a far more pleaſing promiſe fill'd.
Am I thus happier than the happieſt fair;
And move I thus the Queen of ether's ſphere?
Are theſe the glories playing round my head,
And theſe the honours on my ſtation ſhed?
After my throes, their gifts why Kings beſtow'd,
And from Celeſtials why ſoft anthems flow'd?

If ſuch a cruel lot remain'd for me,
And ſpun out life this bloody ſcene to ſee.
Thrice happy dames, whoſe ſons the King with rage
Depriv'd of life in their ſoft infant age;
Oh had you 'mid the deluge loſt thy breath,
Which pannic-ſtruck he ſhed to give thee death!
The Sage foretold my woes, in horrid ſounds,
My breaſt ſhould welter by the poniard's wounds.
Stop, paſſengers, your ſteps and ſee my ſtate,
And join me to my Son, to ſhare his fate.
For ev'ry joy of life is fled away,
And who can be to grief a greater prey?
Then to his Croſs, if pity in you reigns,
Transfix my body, ſocial of his pains.
At leaſt ye mountains wild, whoſe verdant brows
Are now full ſated with my plaintive vows,
Benignly hear, and ſuccour my diſtreſs,
And hear a wretched Mother's ſad addreſs.
Ruſh ſudden now from your aerial height,
And end my ſorrows with your tumbling weight.

The weeping Maid thus pour'd the ſadd'ning ſtrain:
Nor could her friends remove her from the ſcene.
The troops their ſcoffs now on the Suff'rer ſpend,
(To a hard foe, a foe in war's a friend)

With laughter-noding heads the Croſs ſurround,
And the ſky's concave with theſe inſults wound.
Lo! who our city threaten'd and our fanes;
And ſaid, he ſhot from Ether's cryſtal plains:
His lineage drawing from the Sire ſupreme,
And falſely dar'd himſelf a God proclaim.
What homage now is to his Godhead paid,
Since God diſowns him by refuſing aid?
Who many ſnatch'd deſcending to the grave,
From his own groupe of woes, himſelf can't ſave.
Let him now break, to ſhew his Deity,
His captive-chains, and fly the graceleſs tree.
Then ſhall we own, by ſuch a wond'rous ſign,
The ſkies his manſion, and his race divine.

On the ſad ſuff'rer in his dying hour,
Their baſe deriſion thus the ſoldiers ſhow'r:
But, with a mind unconquer'd and ſerene,
He paſſive bears their inſolent diſdain,
Implores with too much clemency his Sire,
To ſpare their ignorance and darkſome ire.

Mean while two youths, nail'd to a tranſverſe beam,
The ſame their theft, and puniſhment the ſame!
Among themſelves are heard in warm debate,
Tho' writhing with the pains of inſtant fate.
One mad with ling'ring woes thus dares deride
The dying Chief, with words elate with pride:

Deſtroy our temple built with toilſome care,
And, in three days, the ſacred ſtructure rear.
If, as you ſay, from Ether comes your line,
And great Jehovah is your Sire divine:
To free us and yourſelf is in your pow'r,
From the ſad train of woes, that on us low'r.
But torments now your race divine belie,
Tho' ſpread thro' towns, compell'd with us to die.

Who on the Chief's right hand in torment hung,
In reprimands employs his dying tongue.
What madneſs rules your mind, ah wretch! declare
The vengeance due to our offence we bear.
But he without offence is drag'd to fate,
The harmleſs victim of outrageous hate.
Ought we not then our horrid deeds confeſs,
Implore his pardon, and for peace addreſs.
This having ſaid, to God he turns his eyes,
View me, you God's true offspring, thus he cries,
And, ſince the lofty ſtars your coming wait,
Be gracious preſent in my dying ſtate.
The God aſſents, and thus vouchſafes to ſay:
You ſhall my praiſe and glories ſhare to-day:
The realms, which me, ſhall happy you receive;
Then, from this hour, the ſkies in mind conceive.

With pain he ſpoke; the ſtream of life ſubſides;
While death from the pang'd ſoul the frame divides.
A boiling ſweat now from his body flows,
And his parch'd mouth with thirſty dryneſs glows. 1050
At length, he rais'd his eyes with death oppreſs'd,
And call'd to quaff the ſtream, his laſt requeſt.
Ty'd to the margin of an oſier-pole,
To his pale thirſty lips they move a bowl
Crown'd with the juice of vinegar and gall; 1055
Loathſome ingredients! which the taſte appall.
From the touch'd juice his poiſon'd tongue refrains,
And a long time the bitter ſenſe retains.

Mean while the bands with loud diſorder riſe,
With ardor ſtriving to divide the prize. 1060
The Suffer'r's robe is the conteſted ſpoil,
Which once his Mother wove with pious toil.
But, as the Tunick without ſeam appears,
It can't be dealt among the bands in ſhares:
Wherefore in fortune all their hopes confide, 1065
By lot to carry what they can't divide.
This once, the ſacred Prophets told in lays,
Their throbbing boſoms big with future days.

His middle courſe now Sol had almoſt made,
When on a ſudden clouds his radiance ſhade. 1070
And in meridian blaze, (a fearful ſight)
On earth incumbent broods a ſable night.
The ſkies lie wrap'd in clouds of mournful hue,
And ev'ry proſpect flies the mortal view.

In the high Heav'ns ſuch ſigns of grief appear,
(If grief had place in the celeſtial ſphere)
One might believe Jehovah heav'd with ſighs,
And turn'd from wicked earth his ſtarry eyes.
The lightnings flaſh; ſparkle the conſcious poles,
And ſhaking thunder thro' Olympus rolls.
Such murmurs rattle thro' the blue profound,
That the world's fabrick cracks, and ſeems unbound.
Earth's centre roars, his waves vaſt ocean ſpreads,
Reel the high domes, and turrets nod their heads.
A chilling horror thro' the nation ſtreams,
And cities ſtructur'd on the world's extremes.
The cauſe unknown, tho' ſtrange the ſcenes appear,
And heav'ns and earth a night perpetual fear.
But browner horrors on the Hebrews frown,
And a pale pannic hovers o'er their town.
A gen'ral groan aſcends the heav'nly climes;
Each mind deep-wounded with its conſcious crimes.
Chaſte dames in long proceſſion ſeek the fane,
With youths attended and a virgin-train:
With adoration at the altar fall,
And on fair Peace with hoſts and incenſe call.
A ſignal threat burſts from the thund'ring Sire,
And on the temple falls the vengeful ire:
The broad expanded veil, from vulgar view,
Which once the ſacred myſtic rites withdrew,
Gapes, a wide ſciſſure, while the columns nod,
Cracking beneath the temple of the God.
And now the dying God's laſt accents wound
The penſive air with vehemence of ſound.

Lo! all is conſummated, Father deign 1105
Receive this ſoul without a guilty ſtain:
Thus having ſaid, he faints, from life retires,
And, bowing down his languid head, expires.

End of the Fifth Book.

ARGUMENT to the Sixth Book.

Joſeph of Arimathea requeſts Pilate to grant him the body of Chriſt. This favour obtained, conjointly with Nicodemus, he takes it down from the Croſs, and lays it in a ſepulchre he had newly erected for himſelf. Here a band of ſoldiers are made to watch to hinder the body being ſtolen by the Diſciples. In the mean time the ſoul of Chriſt deſcends into that part of Hell, where the ſouls of the righteous were. Their joy at the ſight of Him is deſcribed, and their deliverance from their priſon. Early the third morn after the crucifixion, Mary Magdalen and the other Marys come to embalm the body, but, inſtead of it, find an Angel ſitting in the ſepulchre, who announces the Reſurrection of the Lord, and his going before them into Galilee. This report was regarded by the Apoſtles and others, as the work of female fancy; but they were ſoon convinced of the contrary, by his many apparitions, and the wonders he had wrought among them, whilſt he converſed with, and inſtructed them for forty days together in their ſeveral Apoſtolical duties. This Work now draws to a concluſion by Chriſt's Aſcenſion into Heaven, preceded by the inſtruments of his paſſion borne by Angels. Next enſues the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; the wonderful change wrought in the Diſciples by His deſcent, and the miracles performed by them from his inſpiration. Laſtly is ſet forth the departure of the Apoſtles to diverſe parts of the world for preaching faith in Jeſus and the bleſſings attending his reign.

THE CHRISTIAD.

BOOK VI.

NOW Veſper haſtes to mount the gloomy ſky,
While the dead bodies unſepulchr'd lie:
Remain unwept on the mount's hoary height,
Trees ſuſtaining ſtill their mortal weight.
Joſephus, from Arimathean tow'rs, 5
On the baſe treat with indignation low'rs:
His ſoul refin'd with ev'ry mental grace,
And beauty ſmiling in his youthful face:
In the contended field of battle bold;
Rich in expanſe of land and copious gold. 10
He, by the Hero's wond'rous actions ſway'd,
A glad attendant, his commands obey'd;
While others then by fear to foreſts haſte,
Or hide in cav'rns or range ſome dreary waſte;
Without delay the nation's Chief he ſeeks, 15
And thus, endow'd with youth and courage, ſpeaks:
Thou beſt of Romans, whom, with plauſive breath,
Fame ſings unſtain'd with our dear Hero's death;
Who, by your pow'r, tho' oft withdrawn from fate,
Still fell a victim to our nation's hate. 20

Stung with his words to their offences due,
Tho' free they ſeiz'd him, and tho' guiltleſs ſlew,
Grant then, at leaſt, the body to inter,
The only comfort thou canſt now confer.
I ſhall repoſe his relicks in the tomb 25
Which late I rear'd, full of my future doom.

Pontius to this replies with ſoften'd voice,
To grant him living, how wou'd I rejoice!
For I atteſt you, Gods, whom truth delights,
(And Gods and FAITH are worſhip'd with our rites) 30
How often I revolv'd in mind each ſcheme,
From death to free him, who was free from blame.
But vain I ſooth'd the city with my pray'r,
Their rage deſtroying, whom I wiſh'd to ſpare.
Go then, his body honour with an urn, 35
And with due obſequies his fun'ral mourn.

This ſaid: Joſephus bends his ardent way,
And ſeeks the mountain's brow without delay,
By Nicodemus join'd, who climbs the height,
His mind deep wounded with the Hero's fate. 40
And now they both the mountain's brow purſue,
Whence the drear place full ruſhes to the view;
When lo! bright weapons flaſh along the ground,
And cohorts arm'd the mountain's cliff ſurround.
The town forbids the trees the corſe diſplay, 45
Or with the carnage blot their feſtive day.

The malefactors by the Scribes' commands
For burial then are looſ'd by weapon'd bands:
But the tormented thieves are found alive,
Who fond of death their tortures ſtill ſurvive.
Wherefore they break with iron tools their bones,
And the mount ecchoes with their piteous groans.
Their deaths thus haſt'n'd, the bodies they depoſe,
And ſwiftly in the yawning grave incloſe:
But when they ſaw HIM dead, who bore our pains,
To abuſe the ſightleſs corſe their rage abſtains;
They all admire his vitals' ſudden fail,
His nerveleſs limbs, and viſage wond'rous pale.
'Tis fam'd the youthful natives of the ſky,
Their veſtures bluſhing with a crimſon dye,
Were ſeen with wings to beat the airy ſpace,
And in a cluſt'ring orb the croſs embrace,
Catch the bleſs'd moiſture guſhing from the wound,
And bear the chalice to the bright profound.
The baſe Longinus dares alone to hide
His profane weapon in his ſacred ſide;
The ſpear grows tepid, and imbibes the blood,
Which gurgles like a parti-colour'd flood;
For water ſtain'd with gore wells from the wound,
Purpling the graſs, and drenching deep the ground.

Joſephus ruſhes thro' the guarding train,
Aſcends the croſs, lets down his Maſter ſlain;

Far from the din of arms the corſe conveys,
And with the cloth, bought for that uſe, arrays.
Ye heav'n's young throng, your preſence hither bring,
Charg'd with the honours of eternal ſpring;
Narciſſus, hyacinths, and vi'lets pour,
And bathe the body with the roſy ſhow'r.
The hills and woods reſound with female cries,
And earth laments his death in ſtreaming ſighs.
The wretch'd Mother, with diſhevell'd hair,
Pines on a rock, her heart diſtreſs'd with care:
Holds in her lap her Son, with blood deep dy'd,
His eye-lids kiſſes, and his wounded ſide.
And now nor tears nor ſight her grief confeſs;
Too great for utt'rance is her deep diſtreſs;
Chill'd with her fear, and ſtupid with her moan,
She grows as ſilent as the ſenſeleſs ſtone.
Smiting their throbbing breaſts ſome dames deplore;
With tepid ſtreams ſome lave the corſe from gore:
Some, with the textur'd off'ring of a ſhroud,
The ſqualid members of the corſe infold.
This matron bending drops the penſive tear,
And dries his knees with her diſorder'd hair:
While this one kiſſes, with a ſobbing breath,
His hands and feet, ſtiff with the cold of death.
The ſtreaming ſorrow flows from all their eyes,
And the mount ecchoes with their diſmal cries.
The men, while larger drops their cheeks diſtain,
Scarce from the corſe remove the female train.

At length the matrons, ſooth'd, retire with pain,
And in his tomb the men repoſe the ſlain.
The obſequies perform'd, they all recede,
And to her dome th' unhappy Mother lead.

Nor anxious care is from the Hebrews fled,
Their hearts ſtill fear Him, tho' among the dead.
For oft they heard Him promiſe (while his train
Dreaded the proſpect of the hoſtile pain)
He ſhould ariſe the third day from the dead,
And ſacred bards the ſame have loudly ſaid.
Full of this fear, they ſend, without delay,
A band, to guard the buſt both night and day:
Leſt any ſhould, by night, withdraw the ſlain,
And with falſe fame the city entertain;
That the ſepulchr'd treads this terrene ſphere,
Inhales the ſolar beams and vital air.

Come Holy Ghost proceeding from the Sire,
Thou, ether's God, thou, joy of ether's choir,
Whatever veſtiges of woe remain,
Caught from the treatment of our Hero ſlain,
Blot from my mind; and let thy God-head roll
A ſoft infuſion thro' my placid ſoul.
Such liquid gladneſs in my breaſt infuſe,
As the bleſs'd natives of the ſkies bedews,
Where joy in copious torrents pours its tide,
And ſtreaming without limits pleaſures glide.
The ſcene is ſhifted: Joy begins its reign;
And nature now aſſumes a better mien.

And now the God from darkneſs to tranſlate
The holy Bards and Bands to ether's ſeat,
Free from his body's chain his ſoul invades
(The realm of ſilent ghoſts) the deepeſt ſhades:
Thro' darkſome labyrinths, and craggy ways,
Impervious to the ſun's tranſpiercing rays;
A place imboſom'd in eternal gloom,
Of groping fear the horror-brooding dome:
The brother ghoſts, who thro' night's horror ſtray,
Aſſembled here, hold their impriſon'd ſway;
Whom the Supreme caſt from the ſtarry climes,
Shedding his wrath on their ideal crimes.
Plung'd in Tartarean gulphs the wretched train
Too late deplore their direful luſt of reign.
Theſe tyrants yet torment the ſhadowy hoſt
Confin'd and fetter'd on the ſable coaſt.
The ſouls, found cruel, while they breath'd this air,
In hell's abyſs by Styx inclos'd, repair;
Them plung'd alive, in vaults replete with fume,
Eternal fires and growing flames conſume.

The Righteous ſeats, remote, but next in place,
Their turrets raiſe in a wide ambient ſpace.
No burning here in flames vindictive glows,
But eaſe inglorious and a dead repoſe.
Confin'd, the blameleſs ghoſts live in this clime,
Not for their own, but their firſt parent's crime.
From pain exempt, they envy not our rays,
But thoſe that round Olympus' tenants blaze.

Here dwell the patriarchs, an ancient race;
Their lives by no laws ſquar'd, but native grace;
Thro' untill'd fields, with flocks they ſpent their time,
Obſervant of the cuſtoms of their clime: 160
Without compulſion by ſtrict juſtice ſway'd,
Their homage to pure rectitude they paid.
Here breathe the bards, who with the God-head fraught,
Boldly, thro' towns, future contingents taught;
Here Chiefs, who once the world with mandates ſway'd; 165
And thoſe, who freely their decrees obey'd:
Here ſages, matrons, babes, a manſion claim,
The ſame's their love, their wiſh of Heav'n the ſame.

And now, by chance, the ghoſts revolve in mind
The circling years, for their releaſe conſign'd; 170
Thinking the period of their ills draws near,
With gladneſs thus they ſoothe their common care.
Behold, the welcome day impends on high,
When we may drink the light, and view the ſky.
Jehovah once this gladſome day confeſs'd, 175
Gliding from ether's blaze into our breaſt,
Leaving to after ages to behold
The ſaving luſtre we have once foretold.
But, ſoft, attend, our light ſhall quickly blaze;
On us ſhall God's true offspring ſhed his rays: 180

The ſame, who in a Lion's fierceſt mien
Confeſs'd himſelf, our eyes o'ercaſt with ſtain.
Who ſhould, for many, feel the pangs of woe,
And, for us dying, triumph o'er our foe.
At length the Lion conquers; Io's ſing;
The blood of Judah, David's great offspring!
Ye happy mortals wide your Peans ſtream;
Ye ſhapeleſs ghoſts with ſhouts your joy proclaim.
Hark! Heav'n now calls: For us the ſtarry ſpheres
Diſplay their portals, bar'd for many years.
As promis'd in our ſtrains the hour's advance,
When lofty mountains ſhall with gladneſs dance,
When hills with pleaſure ſhall exulting bound,
Their beauteous brows with pampine chaplets crown'd.
So frequent in the fields exult the rams;
Hid in rich paſtures play the tender lambs:
Or, liſt'ning to their fleecy parent's bleat,
Aſcend with playful ſteps the mountain's height;
With liquid honey ſhall the fountains glow;
With liquid honey ſhall the rivers flow:
Or ſnowy milk their ſilver beds ſhall fill,
And from the purling rocks the nectar rill.

While theſe prophetic ſtrains they raptur'd ſing,
The vaulted roofs with their applauſes ring.
Thus when the natives of a town ſuſtain
A tedious ſiege watch'd by a hoſtile train;
With ambient trenches ſafe the city ſtands,
And the bar'd gates defy the martial bands.

Who round the walls with clam'rous fury ſwarm,
And ſtrive with miſſive bombs the town to ſtorm. 210
But if from lofty tow'rs, afar they eye
Auxiliar troops to their aſſiſtance fly,
Their hopes revive; and with rejoicing cries
They pierce the convex of the ſtarry ſkies.

Sudden the great avenger ſtands confeſs'd 215
Within the door, with holy radiance dreſs'd.
A huge confronting gate remains ſtill clos'd,
Its broad expanſe of ſolid braſs compos'd;
A hundred tow'ring columns bear the frame,
Which mocks the force of ſteel and crackling flame. 220
Here ſtops the God, and thunders at the gate;
Th' earth's foundations, ſhock'd with the blow, vibrate:
The vagrant ſtars roll trembling in their ſpheres;
And hell, thro' all its caverns groaning, fears.
The tribes, who hate the light, a trembling ſwarm, 225
From deepeſt vales emerge at the alarm:
They to the knees in human form appear,
Beneath, a dragon's hideous figure wear.
Loud ſhrieks and direful flames ſpout from their throats,
And fumed darkneſs thro' the palace floats. 230
Sudden the gate diſplays its valves abroad,
And flies the hinges of its own accord.

The dome's confus'd, when night begins to ſade,
And from the preſence of the God recede;
Whoſe eyes with holy radiance ſo bedew
The horrible abyſs of liv'd hue,
As when a gem, bright rival of the day,
Streams thro' the ſable night a living ray,
With flames victorious deluges the gloom,
Or veſts with crimſon rays ſome regal room.

But when the demons ſaw the God invade,
And own'd his preſence in their dreary ſhade,
And with the fulgence that his form embrace,
And all the glories darting from his face,
With tremors chill'd, they fly the heav'nly ſight
And caſt themſelves into the deepeſt night,
Licking their tails that round their bodies rowl,
And from their dens aſcends an hideous howl.
Such roaring ſtorms, when eaſtern tempeſts blow,
The half wild Alpine natives undergo;
If from their cots, by chance they view the ſight
Of Roman troops, with flaſhing weapons bright;
Soon from their ſmoaky huts, they trembling fly,
Seeking, along the Alps, an higher ſky:
There ſeated on ſome diſtant rock, admire
The marching Roman Leaders' rich attire.

But the chaſte ghoſts, once lambent with his blaze,
Their ſupine hands to high Olympus raiſe:

With joy they ſhout, with joy their tears they pour,
And with their eyes and minds his ſight devour.
Now round the Victor throng the airy train,
And all ſalute him in this gen'ral ſtrain:
How welcome is thy preſence to our eyes!
Thou ſplendent glory of the ſerene ſkies!
By thee, the gifts, (nor have we hop'd in vain)
By our firſt parent loſt, his ſeed regain.
In its old ſtate you now the world replace,
And ope a walk unknown to ether's ſpace.
You come at length bright as the lamp of day,
Effulging on our eyes a living ray.
Why worn with woe you come thro' tempeſts hurl'd?
(For Fame deſcends into our ſhady world.)
Who has with wounds your ſacred frame deform'd,
Or in your guſhing blood his weapon warm'd?
Shall earth ſuch crimes upon her ſurface bear,
While, ocean, you embrace with ſhores her ſphere?
Where have you loiter'd, in what cave retir'd,
While your Creator in ſuch pain expir'd?
Then all mankind ſhould periſh in your tide,
And guilty earth beneath your waves ſubſide.
But ſay, true offspring of the heav'nly King,
Could nothing, but your blood, ſalvation bring?
For our redemption, from th' infernal ſtate,
Was once not valu'd at ſo high a rate.
Love fix'd the price which you to mortals bear,
Dear to the human race, to Angels dear:

We rais'd the ſupreme arm with thunder red,
And, with the pain due to our crimes, you bled.

Such language flow'd along the dreary coaſt:
Now from their cells fly forth the joyous hoſt; 290
The happy ſouls the Victor-god purſue
Thro' ether's convex op'ning on the view,
To live for ever on the ſtarry ſoil,
Secure from danger and exempt from toil.
The Sire of men firſt ſeeks the ſtarry clime, 295
Nor rears his head as conſcious of his crime.
The patriarchs ſucceed, an hoary band,
Who once were rulers in their native land:
Next come the bards, whoſe breaſts with future glow,
Their temples bound with fillets white as ſnow. 300
But thoſe unhappy ſhades, whoſe crimes detain,
Condemn'd to languiſh in eternal pain,
'Mid ambient flames in deepeſt caverns dwell,
And madly groan to find no end of hell.
But, chief, the King of the ſad realms below, 305
Firſt of the Demons, and the firſt in woe,
His heart with fury ſtung, and big with ſighs,
Envies the happy his forſaken ſkies.
But the bleſt ſouls, along the tender air,
With gladneſs ſeek the promis'd cryſtal ſphere, 310
With vocal harmony ſalute their King,
Who crowns their lives with an immortal ſpring:

Wrap'd in repoſe, they drink eternal day ;
And death no more his portals ſhall diſplay.
The plauſive air their ſtarry paſſage hails :
Clouds fly the ether and ſubſide the gales:
With placid motion, the ſmiling world glides ;
And ſtars roll ſmiling thro' Olympus' wilds.
To light the ghoſts Aurora early wakes
With choral birds, and Veſper ether ſtreaks.

While in the blue immenſe ſuch wonders riſe,
The third day bluſhes in the eaſtern ſkies:
The Sire ſupreme his Son with radiance wreaths,
And on his limbs immortal beauty breathes.
His frame once mortal, and to wounds a prey,
Is now immortal, glorious as the ray
Which polar ſtars ſhed on the clear ſerene,
Or golden Sol in his meridian reign.
So, while a fire's with aſhes overſpread,
No flames along the houſe a luſtre ſhed ;
But fed with fuel, and waken'd with a blaſt,
The houſe with ſudden flames is overcaſt :
And thus exhauſted with revolving years,
Sole of his ſpecies, the glad Phœnix rears,
Upon ſome lofty mountain's airy brow,
His fun'ral pile, of every od'rous bough.
Along the balmy tow'ring pile now ſpread,
(The pile, his tomb at once, and natal bed)
His age he buries in the blazing flame,
Survives himſelf, another and the ſame;

In bloom of youth, from his own aſhes ſprings,
Effulgent with his creſt, and crimſon wings.
With wonder, round him throng a feather'd hoſt,
Viewing his flight to his Egyptian coaſt.

These wond'rous viſions floating in the ſkies, 345
Diſſolve the pannic nations with ſurprize.
And now the ſun his orient beams diſplays,
The night retiring from the guſhing blaze.
Now Magdalena, with a weeping train,
Transfix'd with ſorrow, for her Hero ſlain, 350
Brings in her lap, when Sol in ether dawns,
The ſcented herbage of Arabia's lawns,
The balſam, ſpikenard, and the myrrh's perfume;
The ritual honours, offered at the tomb.
As thro' the fields the dames with ſorrow go, 355
Each mutual ſpeaks the dictates of her woe.
Unhappy we, the penſive matrons cry'd,
That have not with our piteous Hero dy'd!—
But how ſhall we the watchful guard deceive,
Or the huge ſtone from the tomb's entrance heave, 360
To pay, at leaſt, our duty to the dead,
And in the dreary tomb our off'ring ſpread?

While thus complaining, near the tomb they drew,
Throwing, on ev'ry ſide, a piercing view,
Void of all guards the mountain's orb behold, 365
And the great rock from the ſepulchre roll'd.

But the tomb finding, empty of the corſe,
With thoughts the ſlain was ſtolen by the foes,
From Magdalena drops the balmy ſtore
Of fun'ral gifts, ſhe to the body bore.
The hills and groves with ſighs lament the fair,
With ſorrow tearing her diſhevell'd hair.
But ſoon a youth, with purple wings, they eye,
With drap'ry white, a native of the ſky.
To the ſad train he pays this ſoft addreſs:
Whom ſeek ye Dames; why pine ye with diſtreſs?
Let fear, in future, in your minds ſubſide,
And trickling gladneſs in your boſoms glide.
Since he, whoſe cruel torments you deplore,
Staining for you the gibbet with his gore:
Since he, whoſe ſole ſpontaneous death alone
Could, for the ſins of all mankind, atone:
Triumphant o'er the King of Hell's retreat,
Reviſits, from the ſhades, this lucid ſtate;
Inhales, at preſent, this ſupernal day;
His refin'd frame, no more, to death a prey.

This ſaid, in air his melted figure glides;
But doubt, before the preſent ſcene ſubſides,
Pierc'd with delay her mind, with love her heart;
The Maid admires the tomb, and builder's art:
For on the tomb a ſculptur'd ſhore is ſpread,
Where lies a fiſh, whoſe jaws a deluge ſhed:
Such is the tyrant of the ſea, a whale,
Whoſe bulk's a dread to them who near it ſail:

From whoſe voracious mouth the Prophet roll'd,
To reinhale this air, and day behold.
This ſcene (ſhe cries) confirms the Angel's ſtrain;
Nor ancient types drew future things in vain.
For as the bard lay in the monſter's womb,
Three nights and days involv'd with ambient gloom,
So God by friends and ſkies deplor'd, when dead,
Amid the darkneſs of the tomb was ſpread,
A Victor from the empty vault ſhould riſe,
And now (as he foretold) aſſerts his ſkies.

But ſoon the God, in ruſtic veſt array'd,
Moves to the tomb, where ſits the muſing Maid.
Penſive ſhe eyes him: But his ſpeech betrays
The God bedew'd with newly painted rays.
She falls, and holds his knees in cloſe embrace,
Her eyes roll round him, and devour his face.
His placid looks ſoon ſoothe her pining love,
And from her breaſt her plaintive grief remove.
Her colour ripens; but the turgid tear
Flows from her eyes, and, down her neck, her hair.
So hangs the roſe her head of bluſhing hue,
Her purple foliage charg'd with nightly dew;
But ſhould the ſun aſcend the cloudleſs ſkies,
And veſt the fields with his refulgent dyes:
She rears her head, and ſuddenly diſplays
Her damaſk boſom to his golden rays.

As fades her grief, in charms the Maid ſo grows;
And with her King and God to converſe glows.
And while ſhe pants what language to purſue,
Wrap'd in a cloud, he vaniſhes from view.

While, thro' the towns of Paleſtina, Fame
Scatters, without delay, the wond'rous theme:
Congeal'd with fear, the prieſts attempt each means
To ſtop her progreſs, and condemn her ſtrains.
But chief, the troops, who ſpread the firſt report,
Guards of the buſt, by golden bribes they court
To ſing, that his Diſciples ſtole the ſlain,
While, o'er the ſleeping world, night held its reign.
But vain's the taſk to tame truth's mighty force;
For more the prieſts contend to ſtop the courſe
Of Fame, with higher flights ſhe prunes her wings,
And on remoter coaſts the wonders ſings.
Some boldly own they ſaw the tombs diſplay
Their gates, ſpontaneous, and admit the day:
Pale ſhades ſtalk ghaſtly in the glare of light,
Whoſe bones earth ſhrouded with her central night.

Mean time the Hero's friends, a penſive band,
Wither'd with fear, are ſcatter'd o'er the land;
Fancy the ſun ſhall ne'er the ſkies illume,
And, he extinct, the world ſhall fade with gloom.

At length, beneath the roof, they ſad convene,
Which oft the Hero honour'd with his train ;
To them, their King alive, a ſweet retreat ;
But, ſlain, appears a ſolitary ſeat.
The dome no more ſhall feaſt the Hero-gueſt,
Or, with his looks, his ſocial friends be bleſs'd :
No more his name ſhall fill the raptur'd ear,
Or his ſoft eye out-blaze the ſtarry ſphere.
Such ſick'ning thoughts the ſad aſſembly ſhade,
And nature ſeems with black deſpair to fade.
The ſhepherd thus, whom lucre taught to pore,
A hive leaves empty of its waxen ſtore ;
The ſadd'ning bees ſurround the hollow oak,
Tho' thence expell'd with gales of ſulph'rous ſmoak.
Robb'd of their harveſt, ſtill they view the hives,
Cull'd to ſupport, in winter's reign, their lives.
In vain they rang'd the fields with buſy toil,
And ſip'd the flow'rs, to form the honey-ſpoil.

Behold the matrons to the dome repair,
Where the aſſembly lay in ſad deſpair ;
Amaz'd report they ſaw an Angel-choir ;
The King, himſelf, new dreſs'd with beams of fire ;
Beſides, the tomb of it's dead-charge reſign'd,
And all the fun'ral drap'ry left behind.
Some climb the mountain's crown with breathleſs haſte,
And find the tomb an empty, dreary waſte.
Theſe wond'rous viſions ſtill to ſome appear
The work of fancy, and of female fear.

As in our dreams we fancy to behold,
Or abſent looks or 'mong the dead enroll'd.
But lo! when Veſper rul'd the cryſtal plain,
The Hero ſtands before his conven'd train;
His well known form and voice the God confeſs
Laying aſide his blaze, and ſunny dreſs.

Then Didymus was abſent from the dome,
Impell'd by fear (the Hero ſlain) to roam;
To ſee his 'ſociates to the town repairs,
Who lay in wonder loſt, and mute with fears:
So when fierce lightnings, burſting from a cloud,
In flames ſome temple or proud ſtructure ſhroud;
Within the walls the frighted burghers gaze,
And view the manſion, veſted with the blaze.
A thrilling horror thro' their boſoms glides,
Racking their hearts before the pain ſubſides.
With ardor Didymus, the ſcene unknown,
His 'ſociates ſues, the wond'rous cauſe to own:
Peter, while tears bedew his hoary cheeks,
After a cloſe embrace, at length thus ſpeaks:
Heav'n's Monarch lives; whom death ſnatch'd from our ſight;
He lives, thrice happy we, and quaffs this light.
Thus having ſaid, his joys ſo tow'ring riſe,
That, in his mind, he ſeems to tread the ſkies.

But Didymus ſtill doubts and thus replies:
Say, is't the King, himſelf, who breathes theſe ſkies?

Or, rather, ſay, a creature of the brain,
Who, to deceive your eyes, aſſumes his mien? 500

Peter returns: 'Tis he, the very ſame;
Our eyes have view'd, and hands have felt his frame.
Survey'd the gaping ſciſſure of his wounds,
And air celeſtial that his form ſurrounds.

What time, bright Veſper ſways Olympus' ſtate, 505
The windows clos'd, and clos'd the maſſy gate,
Beneath this roof, we lay diſſolved with fear,
And penſive preſs'd our ſeats the feaſt to ſhare.
In this clos'd hall our Chief invades our ſight,
Whoſe ſparkling looks amaze us and delight: 510
With chilling horror we aſtoniſh'd gaze;
While the walls veſted with his luſtre blaze.
But ſoon he checks our fear and vain ſurpriſe;
And interdicts us from the board to riſe.
'Tis I; be peaceful; and your fears ſubdue; 515
Here feel my frame, and my five wounds now view:
Nor did he ſcorn beſides, to take a ſeat,
And humbly ſocial ſhare our frugal feaſt;
The laſt and noted words deign'd to repeat,
Which from him ſadly flow'd, when near his fate. 520
Then willing, from our ſight, to diſappear,
His body ſoftly fades to liquid air.
Scarce had the Sage pronounc'd the wond'rous ſcene
Approv'd and clamour'd by the preſent train,

When enters Cleophas with gladſome mind,
(Whom to his Apoſtles the Chief once join'd)
He lives; diſmiſs your fears, my friends, he cries:
Our Monarch lives; to death no more a prize.
Theſe very eyes devour'd his beauteous face;
Theſe very ears inhal'd his well-known phraſe:
My fellow-traveller drunk the vocal tide;
Pointing to Amon, who then preſs'd his ſide.
For as we travell'd with our ſorrows pale,
Where Emaus' hills ſubſide into a vale;
With us the way an unknown travell'r preſs'd;
His perſon ſtrange, and in ſtrange garments dreſs'd.
While he deceiv'd, with varied ſpeech, the road,
Tears from our eyes, ſighs from our boſoms flow'd:
With ſoothing words he ſought to give relief,
And oft enquir'd the ſubject of our grief.
Our Hero's cruel fate, to him, we ſigh'd,
In whoſe ſad death, our comfort alſo dy'd.
How all his words and deeds our hope inſpir'd;
And with his life our flatter'd hope retir'd.
Unable longer our complaints to hear,
He thus replies, with reprimands ſevere:
O ſhameleſs race, offus'd with mental gloom!
Have not your bards foretold your Leader's doom?
His bloody fall your ancient records taught!
Which you diſcredit, tho' with juſtice fraught:
That he ſhould ſole, to calm his Father's ire,
For all mankind, ſpontaneouſly expire,

His guſhing wounds ſhould ſtreak, with crimſon dyes,
His rapid progreſs to his native ſkies.
A diff'rent doctrine for his friends he choſe,
By op'ning, long before his fate, his woes:
For in the town, I know it, he diſplay'd
His future paſſion, caſt in myſtic ſhade.
Now all things ſhine tranſparent and ſerene,
Nor have your hopes, the clouds expell'd, prov'd vain.
Behold the King, who plants with vines his ground,
'Gainſt ſpoiler beaſts and men, well fenc'd around,
From town he ſends a train to guard the ſame;
The ruſtic ruffians kill them without blame.
At length his Son conſents the fields to tread,
And by the ſame is counted with the dead.
The Sire ſupreme, his ſacred Prophets ſlain,
Thus bids his Son deſcend the ſtarry plain.
But lo! the Paleſtines, with fury blind,
Their Maſter's Son to cruel death conſign'd:
But ſoon the King their City ſhall ſubdue:
And pour the vengeance to the murder due;
Set ſlaughter looſe, among the barb'rous ſwains;
And foreign hands ſhall dreſs the vintage plains.
This ſaid; the Bards' dark dictates he diſplays,
And on the Sages' off'rings pours the blaze:
Evincing by his proofs their rites and ſtrains
Were pregnant with the Saviour's future pains:
The bloody ranſom, that could draw, from night,
Each human ſoul, that ever breath'd this light.

As he evolv'd the rites, how darkneſs fled!
What light on the prophetic leaves was ſpread!
What thrilling ſweetneſs thro' our ſenſes flow'd:
And, in our breaſts, what loving ardor glow'd!
So braſs reſigns its rigour in the flames;
And ice diſſolves before the ſolar beams.
So blind we were, he ſtill remain'd unknown,
'Till we arriv'd to Emaus' little town,
Where feigning to proceed a longer way,
We humbly ſu'd beneath the roof to ſtay.
To ceaſe his journey, Veſper might perſuade,
Expanding over earth a ſable ſhade.
He ſoon obeys; deigning to take a ſeat,
And with us ſhare our poor and frugal feaſt.
No ſooner had he touch'd the wheaten bread
And broke, as by his ancient cuſtom led;
Soon night departs, our eyes inhale the day;
We own the God, and adoration pay.
But into air, like fume, he ſudden fades,
And, grown too fine for ſenſe, our ſight evades.
The truth of Cleophas not one reſiſts
But Didymus; whoſe error ſtill exiſts:
None ſhall perſuade me that he lives (he cries)
Unleſs he ſtands conſpicuous to my eyes;
Unleſs I feel the wounds his body bore,
Once welling out in rills his vital gore.
This ſaid: The windows bar'd, and door remain,
Chriſt ſtands with rays bedew'd, amid his train.
Thus, thro' the glaſs impervious to the winds,
The ſun a paſſage for his ſplendor finds;

Diffuſes wide his glory thro' the room,
His luſtre ſhedding on the horrid gloom.
No veſtige, thro' the unhurt glaſs, betrays,
The golden flux and reflux of his rays.
All proſtrate preſs the earth without delay, 615
And on adoring knees their homage pay.
When Dydimus beheld the diſplay'd wounds,
And heard himſelf addreſs'd by vocal ſounds,
Inſtant he tumbles prone, with horror ſhakes,
And angry with himſelf at length thus ſpeaks: 620
Convinc'd I own the features of your face;
And the true tokens of your God-head trace.
I little thought, (I own) that, after death,
You could inhale this light and earthly breath.
Madly forgetful of your ſupreme lays, 625
You ſhould your body, on the third light, raiſe.
Nor ſtrange: When oft you bade ſome frames repair,
Tho' four days buried, to this vital air.
When preſent at ſuch deeds, could I refrain
My faith, unleſs diſtemper'd was my brain? 630
Perhaps my error flows from your decree,
That others may believe, who ſhall not ſee;
May not demand to feel your mortal mien,
Leſt ſpectres to deceive your frame ſhould feign.
While thus he pray'd, the blazing God retires, 635
And with pure zeal each of his train inſpires;
Nor from the earth he trod Olympus' way,
'Till, in the eaſt, emerg'd the four-tenth day.

Now Peter and his friends had plough'd the main
And fiſh'd, to gain their bread, all night in vain. 640
Drench'd with the billows and fatigu'd with toil,
Collect their fruitleſs nets uncrown'd with ſpoil,
When lo! a youth of beauteous form they ey'd,
Beholding from the ſhore the briny tide.
Nor ſtood the Godhead to their ſight reveal'd, 645
His ſacred frame with mortal limbs conceal'd.
At length he thus addreſs'd the fiſher-band,
Deſiſt not men, but turn the ſtern to land;
'Tis granted, ſailing to the pebbled ſhore,
To crown your labours with a ſcaly ſtore. 650
Their courſe revers'd, they inſtantly obey;
And with their out-caſt nets ferments the ſea.
A ſign of his vaſt prey ſoon Peter made,
And call'd his friends, by geſture, to his aid.
The loaded net all ſcarce with labour heave; 655
While leap the fiſhes, panting for the wave:
John ſoon the God diſcovers, and thus cries,
Our Chief is here, I know him in diſguiſe.
See how his body glows with heav'nly grace!
What ſmiles guſh radiant from his beauteous face! 660
No ſooner Peter had his Hero ey'd,
But from his ſhip he plunges in the tide,
Ardent to hail his Chief, the firſt on ſhore,
Tho' trembling at the ſurges' ſtormy roar.
The reſt, with fervent oars purſue the ſands 665
In haſt'ning veſſels, where the Hero ſtands.

And now the fiſhers, at the Chief's deſire,
Prepare the repaſt which their toils require.
With wheaten cakes, ſome load the board in haſte.
Some broil the fiſh upon the ſandy waſte.
While ſome inſpire the kindling flames to riſe,
Whoſe gloomy light meanders to the ſkies.
Hunger expell'd, the King, without delay,
Thus cries, his God-head blazing on the day :

Mortals with ardent vows purſue fair peace,
And court fair peace with ſofteſt ſongs of praiſe.
And now, my friends, we muſt for ever part ;
Farewell for ever ; let me ſhare the heart :
For high Olympus, thro' its ſplendent ſeats,
Diſplays its portals and my preſence waits.
To be above the reach of frowning care
For ſuff'ring ev'ry ill your minds prepare :
Fear not to go before majeſtic pow'r,
But ſtricteſt truth in Tyrants ears dare ſhow'r :
Too rich to covet what this light diſplays,
Look down on thrones, nor dread the ſceptre's rays ;
Nor be too anxious to remark what hour
Or the beſt method your advice to pour.
I ſhall be preſent with you in my aid,
Shedding a tide of words, with grace array'd.
The Heav'ns themſelves ſhall in your cauſe conſpire,
To nerve your ſtrength, and comfort to inſpire :

When the tenth day ſhall veſt with blaze the poles,
My Sire ſhall waft his Spirit in your ſouls.
Beneath whoſe guardian care, you ſhall proclaim,
Boldly, before the Lords of earth, my name.
A holy progeny ſhall ſhortly riſe,
Brightly diffuſive to the golden ſkies.
The luſcious vines their unſhorn boughs thus ſhoot,
Teeming at once with foliage and with fruit;
But on this world when the laſt day ſhall ſhine;
And yawning tombs their human bones reſign:
When all the dead, who in earth's boſom lay,
Shall riſe again, emerging to the day;
When Sages, Matrons, and an infant band,
Shall throng theſe mountains and the ſubject land;
When I ſhall ſit in judgment in the vale,
And death and life to all mankind ſhall deal:
Ye twelve ſhall, each, aſſume his lofty ſeat,
Shedding, with me, on man, or life, or fate.
Iſr'el's twelve tribes from you their lot ſhall hear,
And nature wonder at the ſtate you ſhare.
Peter, mean-time, (in zeal to none you yield,
The world's great key and ſceptre you ſhall wield:
Preſide o'er all, who willing fill my train;
Such honours I confer, you ſhall maintain.
To you is giv'n the world's imperial lore,
Your reign be legal, and humane your pow'r.
The ſmiles of Peace on the religious ſhed,
And your juſt anger let rebellion dread.

Shall any wretch, with dire offences baſe,
And deaf to reprimands your vengeance raiſe?
From human commerce chas'd and ſacred fanes,
Shall alſo be expell'd the heav'nly plains.
He'll hope, in vain, to tread the ſtarry climes,
'Till, purg'd by penance, you abſolve his crimes.
To you ſuch ſway is giv'n o'er human clay,
To ſhut the gates of ether or diſplay.

Such mandates he pronounc'd, before his flight
From this expanded earth and human ſight.
Thus the ſage ſhepherd, in his dying hour,
Reſigns his ſheep and fold to his ſon's pow'r,
Shews the rapacious wolves' each furtive ſnare;
And the fields hurtful to the bleating care.
The Marin'r thus, grown hoary on the waves,
The veſſel's helm to his companions leaves:
Inſtructs the younger in the var'ous ſtrands,
The dang'rous Syrens, and voracious ſands.

This having ſaid: Reſplendent lights ſurround
The mountain's airy brows, with palms imbrown'd:
The lengthen'd ſhores, ſequeſt'ring in a maze,
Are richly gilded with refulgent rays.
Dreſt with freſh ſmiles mean time, Olympus rings
With plauſive hands, and parti-colour'd wings:
To form a choir, convene an heav'nly throng,
And ether's vaulted roofs reſound with ſong.

To the bright battlements with joy ſoon fly,
And cluſt'ring crown the ſummit of the ſky ;
Some from the portals ruſh abroad diſplay'd,
And, poiz'd in air, with wings Olympus ſhade,
Some touch the mellow flute, ſome ſtrike the lyre,
While ſome the twiſted cornet loud inſpire :
Some the hoarſe clangors of the trumpet blow,
And bid ſoft muſic thro' the cymbals flow.
Before Jehovah's throne the choir advance,
Thrice lightly tread the mazes of the dance ;
Thrice meaſure the long length of ether's court,
The trodden poles reſounding with the ſport.
Thus joy the plumy hoſt, in meaſur'd bounds,
While muſic ſtreams abroad in varied ſounds,
Before the walls of Remus proſtrate lay,
When Tarpeian turrets rear'd their fronts to day ;
When beauteous Rome the world's great empreſs, ſway'd,
And ſubject nations her commands obey'd ;
The Conſul thus, triumphant from the war,
Bends to the capital his victor-car.
Jehovah's offspring thus aſcends ſublime,
The clouds diſperſing, to the ſtarry clime.
But leſt mankind's offences ſhould inflame,
And rouſe to vengeful ire the Sire ſupreme ;
To ſtop the fury of the direful blow,
He brings the enſigns of his deadly woe.

And, firſt, ſome Angels with the croſs precede;
Some with the rods ſucceed in the parade.
Some bear the direful ſcourges which he bore,
Whoſe ſwelling knots bluſh crimſon with his gore.
The column ſome ſuſtain, to which cloſe-bound
His body yawn'd, by ſtripes, one gen'ral wound.
This Angel brandiſhes the pointed ſpear:
And this the pole, which waves the bowl in air.
With the three nails ſome ſeek Olympus' ſeat,
Which once transfix'd the Hero's hands and feet.
The thorny chaplet, which his temples crown'd,
Soars with an Angel to the blue profound.
This bears his title high, which Rome decreed;
And one the lanthorn waving on a reed.
This travels gladly with the broken wand;
Which, for a ſceptre, bore the Monarch's hand.
Before the Hero, thus his pomp of pain
Is brought to ether by an Angel-train.
The men behold, in admiration loſt,
The azure ſpace throng'd with a plumy hoſt;
Their Monarch view, ſmooth gliding up the air,
With hands erect beyond the ſolar ſphere.
But hark! a noiſe from op'ning clouds deſcends,
And in their ears theſe liquid accents ſpends:
Why gaze ye, trembling, on this ſtarry plain?
Here, with his Sire, the God reſumes his reign.

Without delay, Olympus' dome reſounds
With vocal ſtrains and inſtrumental ſounds:
Their joys, alternate, the Apoſtles ſing;
To heav'n their eyes and ſpirits on the wing.
Rejoice ye nations, and with hymns attend;
Behold the God the tow'ring ſkies aſcend.
Ye beaſts exult, who tread the verdant way;
Ye birds with clapping wings your joys diſplay;
Ye ſcaly herd, who thro' the waters glide,
And praiſe him, earth, who ſpreads your ſurface wide.
Let tow'ring mountains from their centers bound;
And with their tides their gladneſs rivers ſound.
Your God, with vocal rills, ye fountains praiſe,
And winding earth; his glory roar, ye ſeas.
Let nature, in her works, her Author own,
And, with a gen'ral ſong, addreſs his throne.
Before time born, Jehovah's great increaſe,
Shall always reign, whoſe God-head fills all ſpace;
Who call'd to being all things from no-where,
The foaming ocean, earth, and ether's ſphere:
From nothing gave to all with life to riſe,
That move beneath the convex of the ſkies;
Divided heav'n from earth, the earth from ſeas,
Veſting Olympus' domes with ſheets of blaze;
Pencil'd the earth with herbs of various hue;
Swell'd fields with corn and vines with roſy dew.
From you life flows; the heav'ns proclaim your ſway;
And heav'n-deſcending rains your nod obey.

With awe the clouds and winds your mandates
hear,
And morn and eve revolve each on its ſphere.
Replete with monſtrous births the azure main
With its obedience ſpeaks your juſt domain. 830
Once balancing the earth your hand embrac'd,
And launch'd the globe into the airy waſte:
Each element in its due place you bound,
And bade it ſeek the center in its round:
Thro' the pure void on whirlwinds wings you fly, 835
And ſhrin'd in clouds you dart from ſky to ſky.
The fleeting hours, indocile of delay,
At your command their winged courſers ſtay.
To you duration bears no varied name;
Time, preſent, paſt, and future, is the ſame. 840
You bade the ſun forbear his ſwift career,
Shedding his beams on the meridian ſphere.
The ſilver moon, whoſe horns began to bud,
And wand'ring ſtars to you obedient ſtood.
The fire's conſuming rage your mandate tam'd, 845
Which round the children innocently flam'd;
Who, 'mid the fiery furnace, tun'd your praiſe,
And ether bent attentive to the lays.
Like cryſtal walls, you rear'd, on either hand,
The ſeas, while Iſrael ſafely trod the ſand. 850
You chang'd the current of the headlong tide,
Which all the banks with admiration ey'd.

From the ſtruck rocks ſoft trickling ſtreams diſtill;
While fonts and rivers ſtagnate at your will:
Earth, at your aſpect, ſhakes with trembling fear, 855
And with your touch the mountains blaze in air.
Kings, at your feet, their arms and ſceptres lay.
And to your God-head adoration pay.
Sounds on the deaf, rays on the blind, you ſtream,
Health on the ſick, and motion on the lame. 860
You hand to life frames fading in the tomb,
And long extinguiſh'd ſenſes you reſume.
Nor was you with your early death diſmay'd,
Nor with hell's regions, which with horror fade;
For the grim Tyrant of the dreary coaſt, 865
Chill'd at your preſence, with his baleful hoſt,
Dreading the havock of his ſhadowy reign,
Lurk'd in a cavern, with the fiery-train.
While you victorious, and your ghoſtly prey,
Emerg'd from darkneſs to eternal day; 870
Where now you rule the ſenate of the ſkies,
And from your goodneſs better ages riſe.
Hail nature's Lord! this world's great Saviour, hail!
With ſmiles behold us, and with mercy deal;
Your death diſplays Olympus' portals wide, 875
And ſoothes your Father's anger to ſubſide.

Thus hymn'd the eleven Sages on the ſtrand,
Beneath a rock, join'd by a youthful band.

Yet, 'mid ſuch joy, with panic fear they chill'd,
Nor with the Spirit-God their hearts were fill'd; 880
The Deſart's dreary wilds they often ſought,
And, trembling, plung'd into ſome ſhaggy grot.
So when the hawk bears from her cell away,
And tears with crooked beak his cooing prey,
The other doves diſperſe, and in ſome tow'r, 885
Safe from the foe, their blended ſorrow pour.
With no leſs horror, at their Monarch's doom,
Their fears conduct them to a cloſe-bar'd room,
The promiſe of their Hero where they wait,
The God-head gliding from Olympus' ſeat. 890

Now dawns the promis'd day, for darkneſs flies
The tenth day's luſtre, beaming in the ſkies;
The Sire ſupreme, in the celeſtial ſpace,
The ſtars now kindles with a purer blaze:
'Mid his Celeſtials, where he ſits ſublime, 895
His compacts filling, and diſpenſing time.
To whom his Son ſtands ſplendidly confeſs'd,
(His mortal limbs in liquid glory dreſs'd)
And pours his vows, before the ſacred ſhrine;
In accents ſoftly breathing love divine. 900

My collegues, Father, now demand your aid,
Who, ſince their Leader's death, with horror fade;
In terror loſt, they rove from place to place,
Such is the weakneſs of the mortal race.
Their fear expel, ſtrength to their breaſts beſtow, 905
To front all dangers and ſubdue the foe.

Now Solyma and Judah's realm conſpire
With guile to ſeize, or 'gainſt them dart their ire,
You promis'd, Sire, (nor is your promiſe vain)
Equal to ev'ry noble act, my train
Shall, far as ocean girts this world, proclaim,
Thro' ev'ry land, my never-fading name.
Inſtruct the nations to reſpect my law,
And by new myſtic rites to homage draw:
And, ſince you grant them in the ſkies a place,
I, oft, relying on your tender grace,
Their fainting ſpirits rais'd; wak'd with the thought,
That aid would ſoon deſcend the ſtarry vault.
Thus help'd, they'd ſcorn a Tyrant's cruel ſway,
And all his wicked mandates diſobey;
With joy, the pangs of death ſpontaneous prove,
And victims fall to true Religion's love.

This ſaid, his transfix'd feet and hands he ſhews,
And with the wound his ſide that crimſon glows,
The thorny chaplet that embrac'd his head,
When to the Croſs he was a victim led.
His arms wreath'd round his Son, the mighty Sire,
Thus, full of love, aſſents to his deſire:
Your vows are heard; ceaſe, Son, your hands to tend,
To your collegues, the Sacred Ghoſt we'll ſend,
And others, whom you will, we ſhall inſpire,
And in their breaſts illume our holy fire.

Waſteful of life, they ſhall not dread the ſteel,
Nor flames, nor beaſts, nor the ſharp-dented wheel.
Who tremble now, at Zephyr's ſofteſt ſigh, 935
Shall, for your love, to certain dangers fly.
Then death contemning, and with virtuous pride,
Their ſouls ſhall iſſue in a ſanguine tide.
No ſeaſons ſhall delay their rapid courſe,
Nor ſummer's heats, nor winter's ſtormy force; 940
The yawning ground when ſultry Sol ſhall cleave,
Or Boreas bind with icy chains the wave.
Farther than Bactra's walls, and Ganges' ſands,
The mountain Iſmarus, and Thracia's lands,
Shall wond'ring view the progreſs of their toil, 945
With Gades' iſland and rich India's ſoil.
Their lays ſhall eccho on Britannia's ſhore,
Round which the ocean's azure ſurges roar.
The world thus roam'd and mended by their ſtrains,
Shall to your honour rear aſpiring fanes. 950
Reformed realms to homage you ſhall haſte,
And iſles environ'd with the wat'ry waſte.
An age of gold once promiſed, as you know,
Shall, on the tutor'd world from ether glow.
Not only for the juſt, condemn'd to fade, 955
By guilt primeval, in the realm of ſhade;
But alſo many more; whoſe actual crimes
Should have for ever clos'd the ſtarry climes.
Your wounds have op'd the gates of Ether wide,
Such force and virtue in your death reſide. 960

Let then the groupe of faults, ſince time was born,
To the laſt blaze that ſhall light up the morn,
Advance ; the ſmalleſt fluid of your veins
Shall chace the myriads and eraſe their ſtains,
What time the Sun in his career ſhall round,
Near fifteen hundred years, the bright profound.
Then Bards ſhall riſe, with love of truth inſpir'd,
Regardleſs of the tales by Greece admir'd ;
Thro' nations pour your murder in their lays,
And towns ſhall eccho with your ſacred praiſe.
But, chief, Heſperia's coaſt ſhall ſound your name,
Where wand'ring Addus ſpreads his gentle ſtream ;
Where Sirius, lucent as the cryſtal, laves
The moſſy margin with his winding waves :
Or, Po, the chief of floods, his torrents pours,
Roaring beſide Cremona's mould'ring towers :
Whoſe foaming ſhore with ruſhing billows threats
A deluge often to the nodding ſeats.
Sweet as the ſwans, who ether rapid ſoar,
A band of youths, upon the pebbled ſhore,
In concert aided by a virgin-throng,
Shall pour your glory in the chaſteſt ſong :
Or in the meads contend who beſt can raiſe
The ſofteſt numbers to your ſacred praiſe :
Infants in bands ſhall their firſt accents frame,
By liſping tenderly your ſaving name :
Such deathleſs glory ſhall around you ſhine :
He ſaid, and on him breath'd his love divine.

Fancy, mean while, preſenting to their view
The traytor Judas' crime of odious hue,
The collegues for the miſſion now prepare,
And 'mong themſelves divide the terrene ſphere,
Where each ſhall in his bounds new ethics deal,
And to the nations novel rites reveal;
One for the ſacred Senate to provide,
That twelve might ſtill o'er all the reſt preſide;
And now by lot, from the diſciple-train,
To fill the vacant ſee, they one obtain:
The lot, Matthias, in a happy hour,
Deſcends and veſts you with the holy pow'r;
In merit wealthy, and in fortune poor;
In title ſplendent, and in birth obſcure.

While the ſame grief on every viſage low'rs,
The ſame addreſs the whole aſſembly pours:
Would the Almighty Ghoſt from ether's ſphere
By inſpiration to our hearts repair;
For oft the Lord to his aſſociates ſaid
The Spirit-God would come to give us aid.
Truth always crown'd our Chiefs' prophetic ſtrains;
This promiſe only incomplete remains.

But hark! thro' ether thunder ſounds hoarſe peals,
And heav'n deſcends to earth's ſequeſter'd vales.
Unuſual lightnings flaſh acroſs the eyes,
And clouds diſtain'd with fire deſcend the ſkies.

Torrents

Torents of fire guſh forth in parted rays,
And all the dome is delug'd with the blaze.
Flames falling on their heads their temples bind,
And radiance ſets on fire the ſultry wind.
So when the ſteel upon the anvil burns,
The luſty artiſts raiſe their arms by turns:
By turns, pour down their ſturdy blows in throngs,
Turning the tortur'd ore with tranſvers'd tongs.
For God the Sire, and his coeval heir,
The Spirit jointly waft from Ether's ſphere.
Now lo! the Spirit God Olympus leaves,
And in the men infus'd the God-head heaves.
Cold fear retires, while ſacred fury rolls
Thro' the deep mazes of the raptur'd ſouls:
Impatient of delay, they feel no reſt,
Their boſoms throbbing with the Spirit-gueſt.
Thrice round them rays with awful ſplendor ſhine,
Thrice rapt in air, they flame with love divine.
In ev'ry mind a guſhing radiance glows,
And their hearts labour with inſpiring throes.
Now free from terror, the Diſciple-throng
Declare God's wond'rous deeds in wond'rous ſong,
While the ſame words (who can believe the lay?)
To ſtranger crowds the cleareſt truths convey:
For of the num'rous hoſt each foreign'r hears
His native language, ſounding in his ears.
From diff'rent climes, now various tribes repair
To view the town or ſacred rites to ſhare;

Theſe rites begin, when fifty days are paſt,
After the paſchal lamb's religious feaſt.
Who 'mid the myriads, ſprung from Lybian ground,
Hear th'Apoſtles their proper idiom ſound.
Admiring Gauls and Romans catch their notes;
While to the Parthian ears their language floats.
Their natal accents liſt'ning Scythians hear,
And Thracians numb'd beneath their icy ſphere.
Crete, Africa, Phrygia hearken with ſurprize;
And thoſe who breathe Arabia's happy ſkies.
The tribes ſtand aw'd, who till fair India's lands;
And Garamantes who roam thro' wilds of ſands.
Each band admire to hear their country phraſe:
And on themſelves with admirtion gaze.
The man abſorpt, their ſouls now wing the ſphere,
And the bleſt converſe of Etherials ſhare.

And now their lips hereafters loud proclaim;
For, lo! the God, with his celeſtial flame,
Expels the night, that on their ſenſes reſts,
And damps the riſing ardor of their breaſts,
Whom, once, each noiſe with trembling horror fill'd,
And chas'd to dens, with death's baſe proſpect chill'd;
Now free from cowardice they walk in day,
And, careleſs of mankind, their thoughts diſplay;

Nor now the point of the deſtructive ſpear,
Nor ſavage beaſts, nor ſheets of flame they fear ;
But own the ſkies to be his natal clime,
Who late was ſlaughter'd, pure of any crime. 1070
With ſhame's deep bluſhes now their faces glow,
That e'er they trembled at their Monarch's foe.
Their ſouls inhale the God with eager breath,
Who in them wakes the hope of glorious death.
So when, in chinks, the thirſty meadow lies, 1075
The herbage withers and each beauty dies;
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Beneath the radiance of the torrid ſkies ;
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Their ſacred rites and to their mandates bend.
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And for her awful rites new altars rears :

The band are Chriſtians ſoon proclaim'd by fame,
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FINIS.

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